



Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



MONDAY — 3 OCT 2022

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Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	10/03 Flu vaccine time; seniors revved up shots
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/its-flu-vaccine-time-and-seniors-need-revved-up-shots/
GIST	<p>Doctors have a message for vaccine-weary Americans: Don't skip your flu shot this fall — and seniors, ask for a special extra-strength kind.</p> <p>After flu hit historically low levels during the COVID-19 pandemic, it may be poised for a comeback. The main clue: A nasty flu season just ended in Australia.</p> <p>While there's no way to predict if the U.S. will be as hard-hit, "last year we were going into flu season not knowing if flu was around or not. This year we know flu is back," said influenza specialist Richard Webby of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.</p> <p>Annual flu shots are recommended starting with 6-month-old babies. Flu is most dangerous for people 65 and older, young children, pregnant women and people with certain health problems including heart and lung diseases.</p> <p>Here's what to know:</p> <p>REVVED-UP SHOTS FOR SENIORS</p> <p>As people get older, their immune system doesn't respond as strongly to standard flu vaccination. This year, people 65 or older are urged to get a special kind for extra protection.</p> <p>There are three choices. Fluzone High-Dose and Flublok each contain higher doses of the main anti-flu ingredient. The other option is Fluad Adjuvanted, which has a regular dosage but contains a special ingredient that helps boost people's immune response.</p> <p>Seniors can ask what kind their doctor carries. But most flu vaccinations are given in pharmacies and some drugstore websites, such as CVS, automatically direct people to locations offering senior doses if their birth date shows they qualify.</p> <p>Webby advised making sure older relatives and friends know about the senior shots, in case they're not told when they seek vaccination.</p> <p>"They should at least ask, 'Do you have the shots that are better for me?'" Webby said. "The bottom line is they do work better" for this age group.</p> <p>If a location is out of senior-targeted doses, it's better to get a standard flu shot than to skip vaccination, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>All flu vaccines in the U.S. — including types for people younger than 65 — are "quadrivalent," meaning they guard against four different flu strains. Younger people have choices, too, including shots for those with egg allergies and a nasal spray version called FluMist.</p> <p>WHY FLU EXPERTS ARE ON ALERT</p>

Australia just experienced its worst flu season in five years and what happens in Southern Hemisphere winters often foreshadows what Northern countries can expect, said Dr. Andrew Pekosz of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

And people have largely abandoned masking and distancing precautions that earlier in the pandemic also helped prevent the spread of other respiratory bugs like the flu.

“This poses a risk especially to young children who may not have had much if any previous exposure to influenza viruses prior to this season,” Pekosz added.

“This year we will have a true influenza season like we saw before the pandemic,” said Dr. Jason Newland, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Washington University in St. Louis.

He said children’s hospitals already are seeing an unusual early spike in other respiratory infections including RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, and worries flu likewise will strike earlier than usual — like it did in Australia.

The CDC advises a flu vaccine by the end of October but says they can be given any time during flu season. It takes about two weeks for protection to set in.

The U.S. expects 173 million to 183 million doses this year. And yes, you can get a flu shot and an updated COVID-19 booster at the same time — one in each arm to lessen soreness.

FLU SHOTS OF THE FUTURE

The companies that make the two most widely used COVID-19 vaccines now are testing flu shots made with the same technology. One reason: When influenza mutates, the recipes of so-called mRNA vaccines could be updated more quickly than today’s flu shots, most of which are made by growing influenza virus in chicken eggs.

Pfizer and its partner BioNTech are recruiting 25,000 healthy U.S. adults to receive either its experimental influenza shot or a regular kind, to see how effective the new approach proves this flu season.

Rival Moderna tested its version in about 6,000 people in Australia, Argentina and other countries during the Southern Hemisphere’s flu season and is awaiting results.

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HEADLINE	10/03 Russia army on ‘precipice of collapse’
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/russian-army-on-precipice-of-collapse-say-us-generals-as-russian-retreat-from-lyman-marks-tipping-point-in-seven-month-war-in-ukraine
GIST	<p>PREDICTION: PUTIN FACES ‘IRREVERSIBLE’ DEFEAT: Russia’s retreat from a key logistics hub in Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region in the face of advancing Ukrainian forces is not only another embarrassing defeat for Russian President Vladimir Putin but may also mark a fundamental shift in momentum in favor of Ukraine, say former U.S. commanders.</p> <p>“No amount of shambolic mobilization, which is the only way to describe it, no amount of annexation, no amount of even veiled nuclear threats can actually get [Putin] out of this particular situation,” said retired Army Gen. David Petraeus on ABC on Sunday. “He is losing, and the battlefield reality he faces is, I think, irreversible.”</p> <p>“The reality facing Russia now is that Ukraine, a country a third the size of Russia, has a bigger, much more effective army on the ground, and other assets as well,” said Petraeus. “He’s already lost a really critical element in that, a critical city that would have been a very key supply hub had they been able to go</p>

farther. And that's just going to continue. He's going to continue to lose on the battlefield. And at some point, there's going to have to be recognition of that.”

The liberation rail hub of Lyman (pron: lee-MON) came as Russian forces melted away without a fight, taking up what the Russian Defense Ministry called “more advantageous positions.”

“This is a tremendous victory for the Ukrainians. And it's a victory that I think that they could turn into a cascading series of defeats of Russian forces,” said retired **Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster** on CBS. “What we might be at here is really at the precipice of really the collapse of the Russian army in Ukraine, a moral collapse.”

“They must really be at a breaking point, if you look at just the numbers of casualties, the vast area that they're trying to defend,” said McMaster, former **President Donald Trump's** first national security adviser. “I think it's very important also to understand that these forces that are in full retreat now out of Lyman were really the first round of mobilization. ... Those forces were hastily trained, thrown into that front, and these are the forces that are collapsing right now.”

IN MOSCOW ‘THE MOOD IS GRIM’: The loss of a strategic city of Lyman on the day and in the same area that Putin claimed his illegal annexation declaration Friday prompted a backlash of finger-pointing and recrimination on Russian media.

“Tonight on Russian state TV: The mood is grim, look at their faces,” said **Julia Davis** of Russian Media Monitor, who [tweeted](#) a clip of **Dmitry Sablin**, deputy chairman of the Defense Committee. “[He] admits that Russia desperately needs ‘to stop and regroup,’” said Davis, “and is experiencing all sorts of shortages, compared to Ukraine that has it all — and then some.”

“Sablin admits that second-rate weapons from the West are better than Russia's best weapons,” [tweeted](#) former U.S. Ambassador to Russia **Michael McFaul** in response to the clip. “He also admits that Russia needs 30 years to win...I wonder if Putin is watching?”

“Kremlin-sponsored media and Russian milbloggers — a prominent Telegram community composed of Russian war correspondents, former proxy officials, and nationalists — are grieving the loss of Lyman while simultaneously criticizing the bureaucratic failures of the partial mobilization,” according to the [latest analysis](#) from the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War.

“Some guests on heavily-edited Kremlin television programs that aired on October 1 even criticized Russian President Vladimir Putin’s decision to annex four Ukrainian oblasts before securing their administrative borders or even the frontline, expressing doubts about Russia’s ability ever to occupy the entirety of these territories,” the ISW said.

“Kremlin propagandists no longer conceal their disappointment in the conduct of the partial mobilization, frequently discussing the illegal mobilization of some men and noting issues such as alcoholism among newly mobilized forces. Some speaking on live television have expressed the concern that mobilization will not generate the force necessary to regain the initiative on the battlefield, given the poor quality of Russian reserves.”

UKRAINIAN FORCES CONTINUE TO ADVANCE: Meanwhile, Ukraine continues to break through Russian defenses, not just in the east but also approaching the important southern city of Kherson.

Numerous postings on social media show [Ukrainian troops displaying flags](#) in various villages in the Kherson region. And [Russian pages](#) warn of an impending disaster and say overmatched Russian troops are pleading for airstrikes to blunt the Ukrainian offensive.

“A Russian-installed official in the Kherson region, Kirill Stremousov, admitted in a video statement on Monday morning that the Ukrainian forces ‘have broken through a little deeper,’” [reported the Associated Press](#).

"If Kherson falls and Putin loses 15,000 of his best troops it will be a political disaster destabilizing the state," tweeted retired **Gen. Barry McCaffrey**, a former U.S. commander. "He cannot find a way out."

McCaffrey and others continue to warn that, with his back to the wall and losing on every front, Putin becomes more desperate and dangerous and more likely to consider his threat to use a low-yield nuclear weapon. "The Russians think limited nuclear war possible to protect the survival of the state," [tweeted](#) McCaffrey. "Obviously not the situation facing Russia. Putin's personal survival at stake."

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HEADLINE	10/02 Burkina Faso ousted junta leader resigns
SOURCE	https://www.npr.org/2022/10/02/1126478594/burkina-faso-coup
GIST	<p>OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso — Burkina Faso's ousted coup leader has offered his resignation as long as his security and other conditions were met, and the new junta leader who overthrew him has accepted the deal, religious leaders mediating the West African nation's latest political crisis said Sunday.</p> <p>A junta spokesman later announced on state television that their leader, Capt. Ibrahim Traore, officially has been named head of state following the Friday coup that ousted Lt. Col. Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba.</p> <p>Their power grab marked Burkina Faso's second military coup this year, deepening fears that the political chaos could divert attention from an Islamic insurgency whose violence has killed thousands and forced 2 million to flee their homes. It followed unrest in Ouagadougou, the capital, in which mobs on Saturday attacked the French embassy and other French-related sites, wrongly believing that they were sheltering Damiba.</p> <p>Along with agreeing not to harm or prosecute him, Damiba also asked Traore and the new junta leadership to respect the commitments already made to the West African regional bloc ECOWAS. Damiba, who came to power in a coup last January, had recently reached an agreement to hold an election by 2024.</p> <p>"President Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba proposed his own resignation in order to avoid clashes," said Hamidou Yameogo, a spokesman for the mediation efforts.</p> <p>Traore accepted the conditions, religious leaders said, but there was no immediate confirmation by Damiba himself of an official resignation. His whereabouts have remained unknown since the Friday night coup.</p> <p>Amid the mediation, the new junta leadership also called for an end to the unrest.</p> <p>In a statement broadcast on state television, junta spokesman Capt. Kiswendsida Farouk Azaria Sorgho called on people to "desist from any act of violence and vandalism" especially those against the French Embassy or the French military base.</p> <p>Anti-French sentiment rose sharply after the new junta alleged that interim president Damiba was sheltering at a French military base following his ouster. France vehemently denied the allegation, but soon protesters with torches thronged the perimeter of the French Embassy in Ouagadougou.</p> <p>Saturday's violence was condemned by the French Foreign Ministry, which denied any involvement in the rapidly developing events. French Institutes in Ouagadougou and the country's second-largest city, Bobo-Dioulasso, had also been targeted and French citizens were urged to be very cautious.</p> <p>"The situation is very volatile in Burkina Faso," a French spokeswoman told The Associated Press on Sunday.</p> <p>Damiba came to power in January promising to secure the country from jihadi violence. However, the situation only deteriorated as jihadis imposed blockades on towns and have intensified attacks. Last week,</p>

at least 11 soldiers were killed and 50 civilians went missing after a supply convoy was attacked by gunmen in Gaskinde commune in the Sahel. The group of officers led by Traore said Friday that Damiba had failed and was being removed.

To some in Burkina Faso's military, Damiba also was seen as too cozy with former colonizer France, which maintains a military presence in Africa's Sahel region to help countries fight Islamic extremists.

Some who support the new coup leader, Traore, have called on Burkina Faso's government to seek Russian support instead. Outside the state broadcaster on Sunday, supporters of Traore were seen cheering and waving Russian flags.

In neighboring Mali, the coup leader has invited Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group to help with security, a move that has drawn global condemnation and accusations of human rights abuses.

Conflict analysts say Damiba was probably too optimistic about what he could achieve in the short term but that a change at the top didn't mean that the country's security situation would improve.

"The problems are too profound and the crisis is deeply rooted," said Heni Nsaibia, a senior researcher at the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, adding that "militant groups will most likely continue to exploit" the country's political disarray.

The international community widely condemned the ouster of Damiba, who himself overthrew the country's democratically elected president in January.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said the United States "is deeply concerned by events in Burkina Faso."

"We call on those responsible to de-escalate the situation, prevent harm to citizens and soldiers, and return to a constitutional order," he said.

The African Union and the West African region bloc known as ECOWAS also sharply criticized the developments, urging the military to "avoid escalation and in all circumstances to protect civilians."

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HEADLINE	10/01 Subvariants top concern for winter wave
SOURCE	https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-10-01/new-coronavirus-subvariants-a-worry-for-winter-covid-wave
GIST	<p>As officials in California and beyond try to assess how severe a fall-and-winter coronavirus wave may be, one key factor is the growth of several new subvariants now emerging.</p> <p>It's too soon to say whether any of the newer variants will rise to prominence in the ways Omicron and Delta did. None have been documented in significant numbers in California or the nation. Still, experts say another super-spreading subvariant — combined with more people being indoors when the weather gets cold — could bring new challenges.</p> <p>“As we get into this coming late fall and winter ... it is likely we will see another variant emerge,” Dr. Anthony Fauci, President Biden’s chief medical advisor for the pandemic, said at a recent virtual talk of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.</p> <p>There is wide expectation for an increase in COVID-19 cases this fall and winter. New York is already recording an uptick since hitting a seasonal low in early September.</p> <p>For now, California remains in a lull, with cases and hospitalizations declining since mid-summer. But in Los Angeles County, weekly deaths remain elevated and well above springtime lows, likely fueled by a case rate that, while improved, is still substantial.</p>

“We’re all prepared for some increase in cases this fall. I think we’d like that to be minimal, and we think if more people can go ahead and get protected with the new bivalent boosters, that will really help everyone try to dampen down the possibility of seeing a very big surge,” L.A. County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said.

But officials can’t rule out the possibility of a severe wave, given the unpredictability of the coronavirus. “It would be foolish not to be prepared for uncertainty because we’ve just seen so much uncertainty,” Ferrer said. “This is a coronavirus. It mutates a lot. We cannot change that reality. [But] we feel very optimistic. We’ve got great tools.”

Following the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, the pandemic’s previous surges have coincided with the emergence of new variants or subvariants that were more transmissible and circumvented the protections afforded by vaccines or previous infections.

Such constant mutations make the coronavirus a moving target. So while officials are largely confident that California and the U.S. are relatively well positioned heading into colder months — thanks to ready supplies of vaccines, therapeutics and the rollout of [updated booster shots](#) — they continue to keep a watchful eye on the horizon.

Most of the problematic variants have been referred to using letters from the Greek alphabet: Epsilon, Alpha, Delta and Omicron.

Omicron has dominated the globe [since last](#) fall, and today’s viral landscape is now marked by distinct subvariants of that strain. They are designated not with letters but with alphanumeric identifiers that have gotten more complex over time.

Among them is BA.2.75.2, which Fauci identified as “one that looks suspicious — that it might start to evolve as a [troublesome] variant.”

BA.2.75.2 has not been found widely in the U.S., and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is not counting it separately from the less worrisome but similarly named BA.2.75.

“The one that we’ve been most concerned about recently is BA.2.75.2,” said Dr. Benjamin Pinsky, director of the Clinical Virology Laboratory at Stanford University.

At Stanford’s lab, scientists have identified only one case of that subvariant, he said.

The concern with BA.2.75.2 is that our collective antibodies — whether primed from past vaccination or a previous case — may be less able to recognize this new subvariant and ward off infection.

Specifically, a preprint [study](#) published in mid-September by scientists from Europe and Africa found that samples from random blood donors in Sweden were much less likely to recognize BA.2.75.2 compared to earlier subvariants.

The study also suggested the [anti-COVID drug Evusheld](#) was less effective against BA.2.75.2. Evusheld is a monoclonal antibody given to people with weakened immune systems to prevent coronavirus infection. Another monoclonal antibody, [bebtelovimab](#), was still capable of detecting BA.2.75.2.

“Taken together, these data identify profound antibody escape by the emerging Omicron sublineage BA.2.75.2, suggesting that it effectively evades current [antibody] immunity in the population,” the report said.

Dr. Eric Topol, director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla, said two of the more concerning subvariants are BA.2.75.2 and BQ.1.1.

“They have already been established as the most extreme immune escape seen to date,” he said. And being more adept than [BA.5](#) — the current dominant Omicron subvariant — “is not a good thing.”

Immune escape means “our immune system doesn’t see it very well because it has a lot of different mutations. So it basically has a work-around,” Topol said. “We haven’t seen this one before, and so it has enough mutations to be able to get into us despite our immune response because our immune response — it has a blind spot.”

Another subvariant, BA.2.3.20, could potentially be even worse because it has lots of mutations, though its level of immune escape hasn’t been characterized, Topol said. And a fourth subvariant worth watching is known as XBB.

What’s common about all these newer subvariants is “they have a growth advantage,” Topol said.

UC San Francisco infectious diseases expert Dr. Peter Chin-Hong is keeping an eye on another subvariant, BF.7, also known as BA.5.2.1.7, which could be contributing to a significant share of cases in Belgium and other European countries.

“It seems that [BF.7](#) is having some legs right now,” Chin-Hong said. “The fact that this grandchild [of the original Omicron strain] is increasing means that it’s probably able to evade immunity because a lot of people got infected in Europe already” with BA.5.

None of these subvariants are circulating at high levels in the U.S., CDC data show. And there’s hope that updated [bivalent boosters](#) — formulated specifically to target BA.5 and another Omicron subvariant, BA.4 — will also afford extra protection against those subvariants’ descendants, such as BF.7 and BA.4.6.

But what’s worrisome about other strains that have a high level of immune escape, including BA.2.75.2, is that they could begin a new surge and potentially reinfect people who have recovered even recently — something that occurred this summer when BA.5 [supplanted](#) BA.2.12.1.

“What we’ve learned during Omicron is vaccinated people can die, too, if they’re not boosted,” Chin-Hong said. “And it’s disproportionately affecting the older folks.”

If a subvariant emerges that “is really immune evasive, it means that more people will get infected because our ‘forcefield,’ in general, as a community will be broken. And as more people get infected, the older people will have an easier time getting infected, and therefore, that infection in them — if they’re not boosted — could lead to severe disease.

“I think hospitals should be on guard,” he added.

People at lower risk of severe COVID-19 — those with some immunity through vaccination or previous infection — are less likely to suffer severe illness or death. Even if they get infected, other parts of the immune system that take [longer to rev up](#), and still work regardless of the subvariant, are expected to respond and reduce the risk of severe illness.

But for people at higher risk, their immune system needs to be prodded more frequently through booster shots to keep them better protected. Their immune systems “are more sluggish. They definitely need more reminders,” Chin-Hong said.

One bleak scenario would be the worst characteristics of new subvariants combining to form another new version.

“One of the questions that people have is recombination: so you can mix and match the best features of one with the other. And at some point, randomly, you will get something that has the immune evasion of BA.2.75.2, for example, and the transmissibility of BF.7,” Chin-Hong said.

For those at higher risk, COVID-19 is [still causing hospitalizations and death](#), especially among people not up to date on vaccinations. Since August, roughly 350 to 500 Americans die daily from COVID-19, which if extrapolated over a year, would result in four to five times the annual number of flu deaths in an average year.

“It is a level of suffering and death that we do not accept as ‘living with COVID,’” Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House COVID-19 response coordinator, [said](#) Tuesday at a Center for Strategic and International Studies forum.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, which has never been as hard-hit by the pandemic compared with L.A. County, some experts suggest the era of local mask mandates is over.

But in L.A. County, health officials — while optimistic this winter could be better — say they need to be prepared for a scenario of booster shots being less helpful than anticipated because of new subvariants.

As a result, L.A. County’s Department of Public Health has not ruled out reimplementing mandatory mask mandates if hospital conditions get critical.

If “we’re in a situation where there’s threats to the healthcare system, and we’re surrounded by people getting very sick ... I think people will go ahead and comply,” Ferrer said. “These are sensible public health precautions.”

She suspected that if hospitals were strained again, health officials elsewhere in California will reassess safety measures. L.A. County health officials were the first to reinstate a mask mandate in response to the rising Delta variant last summer. Other local governments and states adopted that approach in the following weeks and months as more threats emerged, including Omicron.

“We’re also realistic enough to know that there’s always a place for rules to make sure that the collective good is actually able to be realized,” Ferrer said.

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HEADLINE	10/03 Shaky start: stocks drop, oil jumps
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/global-markets-wrapup-1-2022-10-03/
GIST	<p>LONDON, Oct 3 (Reuters) - The final quarter of the year got off to a shaky start on Monday, with world stocks languishing at their lowest levels since late 2020 - when the global economy was still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Oil prices jumped more than 4% as the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, a group known as OPEC+, said it would consider reducing output, while sterling rallied after the UK government said it would reverse a controversial tax cut that had rocked British markets.</p> <p>But sentiment across markets remained frail given worries that aggressive interest rate hikes from the likes of the U.S. Federal Reserve raises global recession risks.</p> <p>European equity markets were a sea of red, with the STOXX 600 index down 1.4% (.STOXX). Shares in beleaguered Swiss bank Credit Suisse (CSGN.S) fell around 10% in early trading, reflecting market concern about the group as it finalises a restructuring programme due to be announced on Oct. 27.</p> <p>Asian stocks mostly fell in holiday-thinned trade although Japanese markets found support on strong energy and semiconductor shares (.N225).</p> <p>U.S. stock futures were mixed and MSCI's world equity index (.MIWD00000PUS) fell to its lowest level since late 2020.</p> <p>Even news of the British government's tax U-turn didn't appear to lift broader sentiment.</p>

Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management, said last week's meltdown in UK markets, following Britain's Sep. 23 "mini budget", suggested a bear market in stocks had entered a new phase.

"Market fragility heading into Q4 means it is time to get comfortable being uncomfortable," he said.

"Getting out of more than a decade of cheap money and liquidity injections was always tricky. But the Fed has not blinked in the face of sliding equity markets, quite the contrary."

MSCI's 47-country world stocks index rallied 10% between July and mid-August. But aggressive Fed rate hikes soon came swinging back in, and that index has [plunged 15% since](#), leaving it down 25% and \$18 trillion so far this year.

Central banks in Australia and New Zealand meet this week and are expected to deliver further rate increases.

Oil prices rallied on reports what OPEC+ will this week consider cutting output by more than 1 million barrels a day, for its biggest reduction since the pandemic, in a bid to support the market. Brent crude futures rose more than 4% to almost \$89 a barrel and U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was up 4.5%, at \$83 a barrel.

UK RESPITE

Britain's battered pound was up around 0.5% at \$1.1200 and its government bond yields fell, pushing their price up, following the UK policy reversal.

"From a market perspective, it is a good step in the right direction. It will take time for markets to buy the message but it should ease the pressure," said Jan Von Gerich, chief analyst at Nordea. "Questions still remain and sterling will likely remain under pressure."

London's FTSE-100 stock index was down 1% ([.FTSE](#)), falling in line with other markets.

Japan's yen meanwhile briefly fell as low as 145.4 to the dollar even as Japan's finance minister, Shunichi Suzuki, said that the government would take ["decisive steps"](#) to prevent sharp currency moves.

It was the first time the yen has fallen through the 145 barrier since Sept. 22, when Japan intervened to prop up its currency for the first time since 1998.

Trade across Asia was generally subdued. South Korea had a national holiday and China entered its "Golden Week" break on Monday. Hong Kong is closed for a public holiday on Tuesday.

Gold was just 0.3% firmer to \$1,664 an ounce.

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HEADLINE	10/03 Europe 'unprecedented risk' gas shortage
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-business-paris-european-union-66a4bbc879a0782418abbd1555fdfbfc
GIST	<p>Europe faces "unprecedented risks" to its natural gas supplies this winter after Russia cut off most pipeline shipments and could wind up competing with Asia for already scarce and expensive liquid gas that comes by ship, the International Energy Agency said.</p> <p>The Paris-based IEA said in its quarterly gas report released Monday that European Union countries would need to reduce use by 13% over the winter in case of a complete Russian cutoff amid the war in Ukraine. Much of that cutback would have to come from consumer behavior such as turning down thermostats by 1 degree and adjusting boiler temperatures as well as industrial and utility conservation, the group said.</p>

The EU on Friday [agreed to mandate a reduction in electricity consumption](#) by at least 5% during peak price hours.

Just a trickle of Russian gas is still arriving in pipelines through Ukraine to Slovakia and across the Black Sea through Turkey to Bulgaria. Two other routes, under the Baltic Sea to Germany and through Belarus and Poland, have shut down.

Another hazard in the study was a late winter cold snap, which would be particularly challenging because underground gas reserves flow more slowly at the end of the season due to less gas and lower pressure in the storage caverns. The EU has already filled storage to 88%, ahead of its goal of 80% before winter. The IEA assumed 90% would be needed in its Russian cutoff scenario.

[Businesses in Europe have already cut back](#) natural gas use, sometimes simply by [abandoning energy-intensive activity](#) such as making steel and fertilizer, while smaller businesses like [bakeries are feeling a severe crimp](#) in their costs.

High prices for gas, which is used for heating homes, generating electricity and a host of industrial processes are feeding through to record [consumer inflation of 10%](#) in the 19 EU member countries that use the euro and sapping so much consumer purchasing power that economists predict a [recession at the end of this year](#) and the beginning of next.

European governments and utilities have made up much of the Russian shortfall by purchasing expensive supplies of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, that comes by ship from countries such as the U.S. and Qatar and by obtaining increased pipeline supply from Norway and Azerbaijan.

The goal is to prevent storage levels from falling so far that governments must [ration gas to businesses](#). Gas storage must remain above 33% for a secure winter, according to the IEA, while levels below that risk shortages if there's a late cold snap.

Lower levels also would make it harder for Europe to refill storage next summer, while higher reserves from conservation would help lower extremely high prices.

European leaders say the cutback in Russian gas is energy blackmail aimed at pressuring governments over their support for Ukraine and sanctions against Moscow.

Since Russia halted flows this month through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline running under the Baltic Sea to Germany, it and the parallel Nord Stream 2 — built but never operated after Germany refused to certify it — were [damaged in underwater explosions](#) that European governments say are sabotage.

Demand for liquefied gas has driven up prices and tightened supply to the extent that poorer countries in Asia cannot afford it. [Bangladesh is experiencing widespread power blackouts](#), while Pakistan faces rolling blackouts and has introduced reduced working hours for shops and factories to save electricity.

“Interregional competition in LNG procurement may create further tension, as additional European needs would put more pressure on other buyers, especially in Asia, and conversely cold spells in Northeast Asia could limit Europe’s access to LNG,” the agency said.

The gas crisis in Europe has also deprived Asian countries of the limited number of floating regasification terminals, which were expected to play a major role in LNG imports in Southeast Asia. Europe has secured 12 of the vessels and plans another nine.

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HEADLINE	10/03 Ukraine continues offensive; new gains
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-moscow-kharkiv-bbe66bfca52988b7982a74f147ea5681?

GIST

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian troops continued to push forward Monday with their offensive that has embarrassed Moscow, with Kyiv officials and foreign observers hinting at new gains in the southern strategic region of Kherson.

Kherson has been one of the toughest battlefields for the Ukrainians, with slower progress when compared with Ukraine's breakout offensive around the country's second largest city of Kharkiv, in the northeast, that began last month.

Ukrainian media outlets highlighted an image of Ukrainian troops displaying flags at a marker for the village of Khreshchenivka, which is in the same area of Kherson where troops apparently have broken through Russian lines.

Russian military bloggers close to Moscow have increasingly acknowledged that Ukraine has superior manpower, backed by tank units, in the area.

A Russian-installed official in the Kherson region, Kirill Stremousov, admitted in a video statement on Monday morning that the Ukrainian forces "have broken through a little deeper." However, he insisted that "everything is under control" and that Russia's "defense system is working" in the region.

Russia attacked Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelenskyy's hometown and other targets Sunday with suicide drones, and Ukraine took back full control of a strategic eastern city in a counteroffensive that has reshaped the war.

Russia's recent loss of the eastern city of Lyman, which it had been using as a transport and logistics hub, was a new blow to the Kremlin as it seeks to escalate the war by illegally annexing four regions of Ukraine and heightening threats to use nuclear force.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's land grab has threatened to push the conflict to a dangerous new level. It also prompted Ukraine to formally apply for fast-track NATO membership

In his nightly address Sunday, Zelenskyy discussed the recent liberation of Lyman, a key Russian node for logistics on the front line in the northeast.

"The story of the liberation of Lyman in the Donetsk region has now become the most popular in the media — but the successes of our soldiers are not limited to Lyman," Zelenskyy said.

Lyman, which Ukraine recaptured by encircling Russian troops, is in the Donetsk region near the border with Luhansk. Both are among the four regions that Russia illegally annexed Friday after forcing what was left of the population to vote in referendums at gunpoint.

In his broadcast, Zelenskyy also thanked troops from his hometown near Kherson.

"To the soldiers of the 129th Brigade of my native Kryvy Rih, who distinguished themselves with good results and liberated, in particular, Arkhanhelske and Myroliubivka," he said.

Those two villages are in the same area where Ukrainian troops have been making advances. A photo emerged at the weekend showing Ukrainian forces' operation southwest of Novovorontsovka on the banks of the Dnieper River.

Since the Russian offensive started in February, Ukrainian forces have recently managed to retake swaths of territory, notably in the northeast around Kharkiv, in a counteroffensive in recent weeks that has embarrassed the Kremlin and prompted rare domestic criticism of Putin's war.

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HEADLINE 10/03 Ian's wake: dangers persist, worse in areas

SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/hurricanes-floods-weather-fort-myers-climate-and-environment-e7ad896b1814a9017fe8f681b0408c40?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=TopNews&utm_campaign=posit ion_07
GIST	<p>FORT MYERS, Fla. (AP) — People kayaking down streets that were passable just a day or two earlier. Hundreds of thousands without power. National Guard helicopters flying rescue missions to residents still stranded on Florida’s barrier islands.</p> <p>Days after Hurricane Ian carved a path of destruction from Florida to the Carolinas, the dangers persisted, and even worsened in some places. It was clear the road to recovery from this monster storm will be long and painful.</p> <p>And Ian was still not done. The storm doused Virginia with rain Sunday, and officials warned of the potential for severe flooding along its coast, beginning overnight Monday.</p> <p>Ian’s remnants moved offshore and formed a nor’easter that is expected to pile even more water into an already inundated Chesapeake Bay and threatened to cause the most significant tidal flooding event in Virginia’s Hampton Roads region in the last 10 to 15 years, said Cody Poche, a National Weather Service meteorologist.</p> <p>The island town of Chincoteague declared a state of emergency Sunday and strongly recommended that residents in certain areas evacuate. The Eastern Shore and northern portion of North Carolina’s Outer Banks were also likely to be impacted.</p> <p>At least 68 people have been confirmed dead: 61 in Florida, four in North Carolina and three in Cuba.</p> <p>With the death toll rising, Deanne Criswell, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said the federal government was ready to help in a huge way, focusing first on victims in Florida, which took the brunt of one of the strongest storms to make landfall in the United States. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden plan to visit the state on Wednesday.</p> <p>Flooded roadways and washed-out bridges to barrier islands left many people isolated amid limited cellphone service and a lack of basic amenities such as water, electricity and the internet. Officials warned that the situation in many areas isn’t expected to improve for several days because the rain that fell has nowhere to go because waterways are overflowing.</p> <p>Fewer than 620,000 homes and businesses in Florida were still without electricity by early Monday, down from a peak of 2.6 million.</p> <p>Criswell told “Fox News Sunday” that the federal government, including the Coast Guard and Department of Defense, had moved into position “the largest amount of search and rescue assets that I think we’ve ever put in place before.”</p> <p>Still, recovery will take time, said Criswell, who visited the state Friday and Saturday to assess the damage and talk to survivors. She cautioned that dangers remain with downed power lines in standing water.</p> <p>More than 1,600 people have been rescued statewide, according to Florida’s emergency management agency.</p> <p>Rescue missions were ongoing, especially to Florida’s barrier islands, which were cut off from the mainland when storm surges destroyed causeways and bridges.</p> <p>The state will build a temporary traffic passageway for the largest one, Pine Island, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Sunday, adding that an allocation had been approved for Department of Transportation to build it this week and construction could start as soon as Monday.</p>

	<p>“It’s not going to be a full bridge, you’re going to have to go over it probably at 5 miles an hour or something, but it’ll at least let people get in and off the island with their vehicles,” the governor said at a news conference.</p> <p>Coast Guard, municipal and private crews have been using helicopters, boats and even jetskis to evacuate people over the past several days.</p> <p>In rural Seminole County, north of Orlando, residents donned waders, boots and bug spray to paddle to their flooded homes Sunday.</p> <p>Ben Bertat found 4 inches (10 centimeters) of water in his house by Lake Harney after kayaking there.</p> <p>“I think it’s going to get worse because all of this water has to get to the lake” said Bertat, pointing to the water flooding a nearby road. “With ground saturation, all this swamp is full and it just can’t take any more water. It doesn’t look like it’s getting any lower.”</p> <p>Elsewhere, power remained knocked out to at least half of South Carolina’s Pawleys Island, a beach community roughly 75 miles (115 kilometers) up the coast from Charleston. In North Carolina, the storm downed trees and power lines.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/03 Russia smuggling Ukraine grain: war fund
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-business-lebanon-syria-87c3b6fea3f4c326003123b21aa78099?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=TopNews&utm_campaign=posit ion_01
GIST	<p>BEIRUT (AP) — When the bulk cargo ship Laodicea docked in Lebanon last summer, Ukrainian diplomats said the vessel was carrying grain stolen by Russia and urged Lebanese officials to impound the ship.</p> <p>Moscow called the allegation “false and baseless,” and Lebanon’s prosecutor general sided with the Kremlin and declared that the 10,000 tons of barley and wheat flour wasn’t stolen and allowed the ship to unload.</p> <p>But an investigation by The Associated Press and the PBS series “Frontline” has found the Laodicea, owned by Syria, is part of a sophisticated Russian-run smuggling operation that has used falsified manifests and seaborne subterfuge to steal Ukrainian grain worth at least \$530 million — cash that has helped feed President Vladimir Putin’s war machine.</p> <p>AP used satellite imagery and marine radio transponder data to track three dozen ships making more than 50 voyages carrying grain from Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine to ports in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and other countries. Reporters reviewed shipping manifests, searched social media posts, and interviewed farmers, shippers and corporate officials to uncover the details of the massive smuggling operation.</p> <p>The ongoing theft, which legal experts say is a potential war crime, is being carried out by wealthy businessmen and state-owned companies in Russia and Syria, some of them already facing financial sanctions from the United States and European Union.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Russian military has attacked farms, grain silos and shipping facilities still under Ukrainian control with artillery and air strikes, destroying food, driving up prices and reducing the flow of grain from a country long known as the breadbasket of Europe.</p> <p>The Russians “have an absolute obligation to ensure that civilians are cared for and to not deprive them their ability of a livelihood and an ability to feed themselves,” said David Crane, a veteran prosecutor who has been involved in numerous international war crime investigations. “It’s just pure pillaging and looting, and that is also an actionable offense under international military law.”</p>

The grain and flour carried by the 138-meter-long (453 feet) Laodicea likely started its journey in the southern Ukrainian city of Melitopol, which Russia seized in the early days of the war.

Video posted to social media on July 9 shows a train pulling up to the Melitopol Elevator, a massive grain storage facility, with green hopper cars marked with the name of the Russian company Agro-Fregat LLC in big yellow letters, along with a logo in the shape of a spike of wheat.

Russian occupation official Andrey Siguta held a news conference at the depot the following week where he said the grain would “provide food security” for Russia-controlled regions in Ukraine, and that his administration would “evaluate the harvest and determine how much will be for sale.”

As he spoke, a masked soldier armed with an assault rifle stood guard as trucks unloaded wheat at the facility to be milled. Workers loaded flour into large white bags like those delivered by the Laodicea to Lebanon three weeks later.

Siguta, along with four other top Russian occupation officials, was sanctioned by the U.S. government on Sept. 15 for overseeing the theft and export of Ukrainian grain.

Putin signed treaties Friday to annex four occupied regions of Ukraine into the Russian Federation, in defiance of international law. The United States and European Union immediately rejected “the illegal annexation.”

Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov told AP the occupiers are moving vast quantities of grain from the region by train and truck to ports in Russia and Crimea, a strategic Ukrainian peninsula that Russia has occupied since 2014. Despite Russian claims to have annexed Crimea, the United Nations ruled that land grab was also illegal.

Videos posted on social media in recent months show a steady stream of [grain transport trucks](#) moving south through occupied areas of Ukraine [with the letter “Z” painted on their sides](#), a wartime symbol for Russia and its military forces. Agro-Fregat train cars have been recorded [rolling through the Crimean port town](#) of Feodosia, where satellite imagery shows trucks and trains lined up as grain was being loaded onto ships.

[The Kremlin has denied stealing any grain](#), but Russia’s state-run news agency Tass reported on June 16 that Ukrainian grain was being trucked to Crimea, resulting in [long lines at border checkpoints](#). Tass later reported that grain from Melitopol had arrived in Crimea and that [additional shipments](#) were expected, bound for customers in the Middle East and Africa.

A July 11 satellite image shows the Laodicea tied up at a pier in Feodosia. The ship’s radio transponder was turned off and its cargo holds were open, being filled with a white substance from waiting trucks. Two weeks later, when it arrived at the Lebanese port city Tripoli, it claimed to be carrying grain from a small Russian port on the other side of the Black Sea.

A copy of the ship’s manifests obtained by AP claimed its port of origin was Kavkaz, Russia. Its cargo was listed as nearly 10,000 metric tons of “Russian Barley and Russian Flour in Bags.” The shipper was listed as Agro-Fregat and the buyer was Loyal Agro Co Ltd., a wholesale grocer headquartered in Turkey.

Agro-Fregat didn’t respond to emailed questions and soon after AP’s inquiry, the company’s website appears to have been taken down. A phone number that had been listed on the website was out of service last week.

A spokesman for Loyal Agro said the company took delivery of 5,000 tons of flour and the rest of the ship’s cargo went to Tartus, Syria.

“We reached an agreement with Russia, the flour came from Russia,” said Muhammed Cuma, a spokesman for the company. “If the flour was stolen, then the Lebanese authorities would not have allowed it (to be imported).”

But the Laodicea couldn’t have picked up its cargo in Kavkaz, the Russian port listed on the manifest. The ship’s hull, which reaches 8 meters (26 feet) below the surface, would run aground in the relatively shallow port, which according to [Russia’s transport regulator](#) can only accommodate ships with a maximum depth of 5.3 meters (17.5 feet).

The port in Feodosia is more than twice as deep — easily able to accommodate the big ship.

The Laodicea is one of three bulk cargo vessels operated by [Syriamar Shipping Ltd.](#), a Syrian government-run company under U.S. sanctions since 2015 for its ties to the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

AP tracked 10 voyages made by the Laodicea and her sister ships — Souria and Finikia — from the Ukrainian coast to ports in Turkey, Syria and Lebanon.

Syriamar didn’t respond to emails to its headquarters in Latakia, Syria. A call to the phone number on the company’s website went unanswered.

Another company involved in smuggling grain is [United Shipbuilding Corp.](#), a Russian state-owned defense contractor that builds warships and submarines for Russia’s navy. In April, the company and its senior executives were [sanctioned](#) by the United States for providing weapons to the Russian war effort.

The company, through its subsidiary [Crane Marine Contractor](#), bought three cargo ships just weeks before Putin invaded Ukraine, in a departure from its core business providing heavy lift platforms to the oil and gas industry.

The three ships have made at least 17 trips between Crimea and ports in Turkey and Syria.

A spokeswoman for United Shipbuilding Corp. in Moscow didn’t respond to questions sent via email. When AP called Crane Marine Contractor a receptionist answered by saying the company’s name. A man she transferred the call to, however, insisted AP had the wrong number.

“You have reached the wrong place, we do not have such information,” said the man, who refused to give his name. “I have no clue what you are talking about and no clue who I can connect you with, do you understand?”

During a typical voyage in mid-June, a 170-meter-long ship (560 feet) called the Mikhail Nenashev was captured on satellite being loaded at the Russian-controlled Avlita Grain Terminal in Sevastopol, Crimea, while its radio transponder was turned off. The ship’s crew turned the signal back on two days later while underway in the Black Sea.

It turned south toward the Mediterranean and arrived on June 25 in Dörtyol, Turkey where exclusive video obtained by AP shows it two days later at a pier owned by MMK Metalurji, a steel producer. Cranes at the dock can be seen scooping up large bucket loads of grain and dropping it into waiting trucks that drive away.

[MMK Metalurji](#) is the Turkish subsidiary of [Magnitogorsk Iron & Steel Works](#), a major Russian steel conglomerate controlled by Viktor Rashnikov, a Russian billionaire who is [close to Putin](#). Rashnikov and his company have been [sanctioned](#) by the United States, European Union and United Kingdom for providing revenue and equipment in support of Russia’s war effort.

In an email to AP, the company said the grain came from Russia: “The place where the said cargo is loaded is PORT KAVKAZ ... according to the customs declaration and the written declaration made by the shipping agency to us.”

As with Laodicea, Nenashev’s draught is too deep to dock at the Kavkaz port.

Ami Daniel, CEO of the marine data analytics company Winward, said ships running dark is a red flag that illegal activity is occurring. He said it is also common for smugglers to falsify shipping manifests and customs declarations to hide the true origin of their cargo.

“Illegally falsifying documentation is a tactic used by bad actors to disguise the origin of the goods they are transporting, be it for the purpose of evading sanctions, trafficking illicit goods, or other crimes,” said Daniel, a former Israeli naval officer.

Rashnikov, who has a personal fortune estimated at more than \$10 billion, appears to have anticipated the sanctions.

Days before Russia launched its February invasion, his 140-meter-long superyacht (460 feet), the [Ocean Victory](#), cruised from Dubai to the Maldives, a remote archipelago in the Indian Ocean where the government hasn’t enforced Western sanctions. Ocean Victory’s crew turned off its radio transponder on March 1, and the \$300 million party barge has been running dark ever since.

Since the invasion, global grain prices have skyrocketed, boosting profits for Russian smugglers, while triggering what U.N. World Food Program director David Beasley on Sept. 15 called a [“tsunami of hunger”](#) affecting at least 345 million people.

While there is little evidence Ukrainians themselves are under threat of famine, Russia’s war of aggression has starved its economy of export revenue. In 2021, before Russia’s most recent invasion, Ukraine exported \$5 billion worth of wheat, corn and vegetable oils — primarily in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

The high prices haven’t helped Ukrainian farmers in the occupied regions, who have been forced to sell their harvests to Russian-controlled companies for half of what they would have been paid before the war, according to Fedorov, the Melitopol mayor. If a farmer refuses, he said, the Russians just take the grain anyway, paying nothing.

“It is a very low price, and our farmers don’t understand what they can do,” said Fedorov, who evacuated to Ukrainian-controlled territory after the invasion but keeps in touch with people back home.

Ukrainian agricultural holding company HarvEast reported that Russians had taken about 200,000 metric tons of grain, which CEO Dmitry Skorniyakov said cost his company about \$50 million. He said his employees in the occupied Ukrainian city of Mariupol reported the grain was trucked across the border into Russia.

“To steal it, they just drive to Rostov and Taganrog, small Russian ports, then mix it with the Russian grain and say that that is Russian grain,” Skorniyakov said.

The same appears to be happening at sea.

Satellite imagery and transponder data shows large cargo ships anchored off the Russian coast rendezvousing with smaller ships shuttling grain from both Crimean and Russian ports, obscuring the true origin of the cargo. Those larger ships then carried the blended grain to Egypt, Libya, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Daniel, the former naval officer whose company tracks ships globally, said ship-to-ship transfers of cargo at sea are rare, and are usually tied to smuggling. “When you’re a sanctioned country, you have a much

more limited market,” he said. “So if you don’t blend your cargoes or if you don’t hide your origin, you probably have a much smaller market and therefore much lower price.”

High demand for grain makes it easy for Russians to find buyers, said Oleg Nivievskyi, assistant professor and vice president for economics education at the Kyiv School of Economics.

“There will be no problem to sell the stolen grain from Ukraine whatsoever,” he said.

Yayla Agro, which makes packaged dried goods and ready-to-eat meals regularly stocked on the shelves of Turkish supermarkets, said it bought 8,800 metric tons of corn delivered by the Russian ship Fedor to the Turkish port of Bandirma on June 17. The cargo would be worth about \$2.7 million.

In a statement to AP, Yayla Agro denied it had ever purchased grain from the Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, and said the bill of lading, certificate of origin and other official documents show the ship had been loaded in the port of Kavkaz.

“We would like to stress that our company is involved in international trade, abides by ethical rules and considers abiding by international law as an absolute priority,” the company said. “In the same vein, (Yayla Agro) meticulously examines whether its commercial partners are the subject of any international sanction.”

Satellite imagery from June 12 shows the Fedor was actually loaded in Sevastopol, Crimea.

AnRussTrans, the Russian company that owns the ship through a subsidiary, didn’t respond to emailed questions. Sergey Dubrov, who answered the phone at the company’s headquarters in Moscow, denied receiving AP’s email and said he would only respond to written questions.

“I can say one thing,” he added. “The ships exclusively work on legal transportation and do not violate international law.”

Yayla also confirmed purchasing 7,000 metric tons of corn from another Russian ship, SV. Nikolay, on June 24. Satellite imagery shows the ship had docked at the grain terminal in Sevastopol six days earlier, but the company said its documentation showing the grain had come from Kavkaz.

As with the other smuggling ships, both the Fedor and SV. Nikolay are too big to dock at Kavkaz.

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Turkey’s role in the theft of Ukrainian grain is particularly sensitive because the NATO country has tried to play the role of mediator between the two warring countries.

Turkey helped broker an agreement between Russia and Ukraine in July to allow both countries to export grain and fertilizer through safe corridors in the Black Sea. The deal did not address the grain Russia has taken from occupied areas. In the last two months Ukrainian officials said more than 150 ships carrying grain have departed from ports they still control, including shipments to Somalia and Yemen, war-torn nations currently facing famine.

Yet there are also indications the Turkish government itself may be a recipient of disputed grain from Ukraine. AP and “Frontline” tracked trips from Crimea to Turkey by the smuggling ships Mikhail Nenashev, Laodicea and Souria to docks with seaside silos operated by the Turkish Grain Board, a government-run entity that imports and exports grain and other agricultural products.

The board’s press office and executives did not respond to emails with detailed questions about the suspect shipments.

	<p>Though Turkish authorities have pledged to stop illegal smuggling, Turkey’s foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in a June news conference his country had not found any evidence of theft.</p> <p>“We’ve received such claims,” he said. “And such information is coming from the Ukrainian side from time to time. We take every claim seriously and investigate it seriously. ... In our investigation on ships’ ports and goods’ origins, following claims about Turkey, we saw the origin records to be Russia.”</p> <p>Whatever the records say, the smuggling operation continues.</p> <p>Crane Marine Contractor’s ship Matros Koshka — named for a Russian sailor lauded as a national hero for his bravery during the Crimean War of 1854 — cruised north last week into the Black Sea with a listed destination of Kavkaz before turning off its transponder and running dark.</p> <p>Satellite imagery taken Thursday showed the 161-meter-long ship (528 feet) had docked once again at the grain terminal in the occupied Ukrainian port of Sevastopol, little more than a mile from a Soviet-era statue honoring its namesake.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 ‘Black tax’ cost millions cities can’t afford
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/business/a-black-tax-costs-u-s-cities-millions-they-cant-afford/
GIST	<p>Bloomberg - Althea Greene walks under exposed pipes and into an auditorium, where the chairs are broken and splintering. Treadwell Middle School, built in 1943, looked pretty shabby when Greene was a student here in Memphis 50 years ago. On this August morning, Greene laments that little, if anything, has changed. “We’re lucky it’s still standing,” she says.</p> <p>No doubt. That same month, a library’s ceiling collapsed in another Memphis school. It had been built 90 years ago. Greene is touring Treadwell because she’s vice chair of the school board, responsible for the 110,000 Memphis children in Tennessee’s largest school system. At another building she visits later that day, water leaks through the ceiling, seeping under the tiles of a classroom and rendering it unfit for students. Not far away, a burst water pipe overflowed into a high school football field, leaving the team to practice in the mud.</p> <p>There’s a familiar reason the Memphis-Shelby County schools are in sorry shape: Lacking basics such as air conditioning, locks, intercoms, and outdoor lighting, they face \$400 million in deferred maintenance. The system relies partly on local property taxes, and its students tend to come from poor families.</p> <p>Now, scholars in the vanguard of finance, accounting, history, and geography say something else could be making matters even worse: racial bias in the \$4 trillion U.S. municipal bond market. To pay for new schools and other major projects, places such as Memphis pay higher interest rates simply because they’re majority Black, the researchers say. They call it the “Black tax.”</p> <p>Studies are documenting just how much more Black communities pay, as well as the role of racial bias. Finance experts know that many Black communities have higher unemployment and lower incomes-which leads to lower bond ratings and higher interest rates. So the academics are studying reams of bond offerings, attempting to adjust for this situation by comparing communities alike in every way except for race.</p> <p>Matthew Wynter, a finance professor at Stony Brook University in New York, estimates that Shelby County, which funds Memphis schools, is paying \$5 million more each year because of its Black population. Since 1990, he figures, the county has paid \$150 million more-enough to wipe out almost 40% of its deferred maintenance expenses. Add up those sums across the U.S., and the penalty amounts to \$900 million annually, more than the entire annual budget of the City of Memphis, according to an estimate by researchers at money manager Breckinridge Capital Advisors Inc. in Boston. “We were shocked,” Wynter says. “It’s pretty ubiquitous.”</p>

Policymakers are taking notice. Last year the U.S. House Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on racial inequity in the municipal bond market. It focused largely on a paper finding that historically Black colleges and universities pay more when issuing munis. Al Green, a Texas Democrat who chairs the subcommittee, called the findings “profoundly troubling.”

The National League of Cities is examining this issue with a \$4 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In July the Brookings Institution’s annual municipal finance conference, which attracts scores of academics and other experts from across the country, held a session on the Black tax. “Regulators are watching and taking evidence very seriously,” says Justin Marlowe, a professor at the University of Chicago and one of the conference’s organizers, citing the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board. The MSRB says it’s looking at the research. The SEC declined to comment.

Bank of America, Citigroup, and JPMorgan Chase, the biggest U.S. municipal bond underwriters last year, also declined to comment, as did other companies asked to discuss the issue. But Gary Hall, who leads public finance at Siebert Williams Shank & Co., the largest minority-owned investment bank, defended the industry in the congressional hearing: “We would not have repeat clients if we didn’t obtain the lowest cost of financing possible based on fundamentals of credit and risk.”

In his office overlooking the Mississippi River, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, a Yale-educated lawyer who grew up in Memphis, says he doesn’t know exactly what to make of the idea of a Black tax. Like many municipal officials, Harris, who’s Black, says he doesn’t know enough about the market’s intricacies. “If the interest-rate variation is high just based on the minority population, that would be really troubling and problematic for us because we do a lot of borrowing,” says the mayor, whose county has about \$1 billion in debt.

One thing Harris does know: The schools are in terrible shape, and millions of dollars could make a world of difference. Memphis hasn’t built a new high school for 14 years. “And we have got to make that happen,” he says.

In his 2021 book, *The Bonds of Inequality: Debt and the Making of the American City*, Destin Jenkins, an historian at Stanford, discovered that the Black tax has deep roots. In troves of records from post-World War II San Francisco, he found that bankers had a dim view of the creditworthiness of non-White communities. For example, in 1966, the winning entry for the Investment Bankers Association of America’s annual essay contest argued that Black populations should be considered “deleterious factors” in bond ratings.

In a 2009 study, John Yinger, an economics professor at Syracuse University, found that with each 1 percentage-point increase in a community’s Black population it becomes between 1 percentage point and 1.5 percentage points more likely to be given a low bond rating. Yinger considers it evidence that bond raters, which didn’t respond to requests for comment, were engaging in the muni market equivalent of redlining, the banking practice of refusing to offer mortgages to customers in Black neighborhoods. Yinger posted the study as a comment on the SEC website but hasn’t heard back. In research published last year, Sage Ponder, a geography professor at Florida State University, examined 4.9 million bonds that Baltimore, Detroit, Memphis, and other predominantly Black cities issued between 1970 and 2014 and reached a similar conclusion.

Stony Brook’s Wynter dug into the muni data after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Wynter had grown up around banks; his mother, a Jamaican immigrant, worked at one in Richmond, Va. With co-authors Ashleigh Eldemire at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and Kimberly Luchtenberg at American University, he studied 66,500 municipal bonds, along with measures of each community’s race, income, and employment. The goal was to compare bond offerings that were essentially identical, except for race. His main finding: Issuers pay a little less than half a basis point (half of one-hundredth of a percentage point, the difference between 3.00% and 3.005%) more in borrowing costs for every additional percentage point of Black population.

For majority-Black communities, that tiny figure can add up to real money. Consider Shelby County. It's 55% Black. Wynter figures it pays about 24 basis points more than a financially similar White community. That amounts to a \$150 million penalty since 1990. Sophia Anthony, a spokeswoman for Goldman Sachs, the underwriter for the biggest share of Shelby County's debt in that period, declined to discuss these figures or the researchers' other findings. As part of its socially responsible investing initiatives, Breckinridge Capital, working with Duke and Northeastern University researchers, found a Black tax about half the size of Wynter's. Even then, when they did the math for the entire U.S., it came to almost \$900 million a year.

The most benign reason for the penalty would be that the data don't fully account for a difference in the finances of the municipalities they're comparing. The least: Investors don't like Blacker cities. To look for evidence of discrimination, Wynter and other scholars reviewed measures of what social scientists call "racial animus"—for example, racially charged tweets about President Barack Obama's reelection. Did regions with higher measures of animus punish Blacker cities?

The muni market is a good laboratory for testing this hypothesis. Buyers are likely to know the demographics of cities when they purchase bonds. Potential buyers often look first at their state's bonds because their income is free of state, as well as federal, tax. Individuals, investing with their brokers, make up much of the market. In municipalities with higher levels of racial animus, Wynter and others found, the Black tax was higher. Or, as Wynter puts it, they were "less willing to hold assets that are associated with Black people."

The history of the Memphis-Shelby County school system magnifies the impact of any Black tax. Around 2013, White suburbs voted to secede from the county, forming their own school districts. Breaking out on their own made the suburbs financially stronger and Memphis weaker. Today, Fitch Ratings Inc. considers Shelby County's creditworthiness to be AA+, just below the highest level. Collierville, one of the breakaway White suburbs, gets Aaa, the highest rating, from Moody's Investors Service Inc. (In his research, Wynter didn't compare Shelby with Collierville but to a composite of financially similar issuers.)

In 2015, Collierville sold more than \$90 million in bonds in part to pay for a new, 450,000-square-foot high school with a 1,000-seat auditorium, sun-drenched library, welding lab, and culinary arts classroom with multiple six-burner ranges. Its athletics complex, with an artificial turf field and three gyms, could be mistaken for an NFL training center. A Jumbotron hangs over the 5,000-seat stadium. (Collierville superintendent Gary Lilly says the system can afford these amenities because, unlike Memphis, it has a separate tax for schools.)

A 30-minute drive away, at Memphis-Shelby County's Craigmont High School, the football fields are overgrown and lack markings for yard lines. It was here, at the end of summer, that the water pipe broke, soaking the field. A green discharge, which looks like mold, cakes the walls of the showers, rendering them unusable.

On an August afternoon, in the first days of the school year, Marcus Randolph Jr., a 17-year-old senior, wraps up practice as a cornerback. His dad points to an ancient weight machine. "This right here I know Jesus used," Marcus Sr. jokes. A truck driver who's ferrying kids home this afternoon, he says his son has NFL dreams. As of early September, the football team was undefeated, despite the state of the field. "They succeed, not because of, but in spite of," he says.

The school leadership is fighting for a long-term fix to its decrepit buildings as part of what it calls "Reimagining 901," after the Memphis area code. Over the next decade the schools need \$55 million a year, a sum that will almost certainly require more borrowing.

Back at Treadwell Middle School, Greene, the school board vice chair, walks over cracked floor tiles, through hallways lined with scuffed red lockers and aging wooden doors. She points to the faded figure of an eagle, the school mascot, etched over a doorway. "That's probably the oldest dirt in the whole building," she says, before ducking into the cafeteria. It's so small that some kids have to eat lunch as early as 9:30 a.m.

Greene herself demonstrates the school's importance to the community. After graduating from college, she returned to work in the school system for 38 years, serves as a bishop in her church, and owns a restaurant and catering service. Even with its deteriorating building, Treadwell, where children wear uniforms in the red, black, and gray school colors, is one of her district's top-performing schools. It's produced many leaders, such as NBA star Penny Hardaway, who now coaches the University of Memphis basketball team. "We are the hidden gem," says the principal, Brandon Hill. He's been meeting with an architect and dreams of a larger school cafeteria and even an indoor swimming pool. After a century, if all goes well, Treadwell will finally be demolished and replaced with something new.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Portland still whitest big city in America
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/portland-is-still-the-whitest-big-city-in-america/
GIST	<p>oregonlive.com - As the United States became more ethnically and racially diverse in the last decade, Portland did too – all while remaining the whitest big city in America.</p> <p>In 2020, 66.4% of city residents identified as non-Hispanic white, according to census data, down from 72.2% a decade earlier and 75.5% two decades before that.</p> <p>The latest numbers still leave Portland with the highest share of white residents among the nation's most populous cities. That's in part because Portland's demographic changes have not yet outpaced those in other areas. But some demographers think growing Latino and Asian populations mean Portland by 2030 will no longer be the nation's whitest big city.</p> <p>Portland's current demographics are a remnant of Oregon's racist and exclusionary past, experts say, which discouraged people of color from moving to the state.</p> <p>Oregon's geography, historical racist policies and structural racism still seen today suggest that Portland's current racial demographics are no accident—even as Portland is known as a liberal stronghold and the city's image is often associated with hipsters, craft coffee and progressive politics.</p> <p>One area where some say such structural inequities exist is Portland's form of government, which does not allow for district representation and until recently resulted typically in white men winning seats on the Portland City Council. Voters on the November ballot will consider changing the city's structure of government.</p> <p>Melanie Billings-Yun, chair of the charter commission recommending the overhaul, said Portland started out virtually all white and has stayed largely that way ever since, by design.</p> <p>"Oregon was built on a racist policy ... and it was a very unfriendly city toward minority populations," Billings-Yun said. "As the city grew, more people started moving in, many of those racist laws are gone, but the legacy of those old laws can still be seen. And part of that legacy is this form of government that we have."</p> <p>Candace Avalos, who chairs the city's Citizen Review Committee for police accountability and is also on the charter commission, said that those who hold leadership roles continue "to look very white."</p> <p>More broadly, the city's growing diversity can help better connect residents with people, ideas and issues beyond their own life experiences.</p> <p>"There's a lot of people who don't have the day-to-day experience of interacting with someone that doesn't look like them," said Avalos, a contract columnist for The Oregonian/OregonLive's opinion section. "Because of that, a lot of people here are just really out of touch with what communities need."</p> <p>Exclusion laws and hostile climate</p>

Historically, Portland's demographic portrait has never varied much, despite the occasional boasting by community and city leaders of the city's diversity.

Part of the explanation is geography.

Carl Abbott, professor of urban planning at Portland State University, says Portland was farther away and harder to get to from population centers on the East Coast and in the South during periods of migration in the country's early history.

"I think one of the important reasons that Portland has historically had a very small African American population is that it's a long way from the South," Abbott said.

While geography may be one factor, Seattle is even farther from those areas than Portland, and it has a higher share of residents of color, underscoring the importance of other factors.

The fact that Portland and the rest of the state has remained overwhelmingly white is no accident, said Darrell Millner, emeritus Black studies professor at Portland State University.

In 1844, before Oregon became a state, the provisional government passed the first of a series of Black exclusion laws. It prohibited African Americans from entering the territory and required all former slaves who had settled in Oregon to leave. Those who failed to follow the order would be publicly whipped.

When Oregon entered the Union in 1859, it did so as a "whites-only" state, Millner said. The original state constitution banned slavery, but also excluded nonwhites from living there. Oregon was the only free state admitted to the union that had laws specifically prohibiting certain races from legally living, working or owning property within its borders.

The state's exclusion laws had a deterrent effect on potential Black immigrants, as the laws made it clear that Oregon had a hostile climate for Blacks contemplating a move west, said Millner.

Oregon was anti-slavery largely to protect white settlers in Oregon – granted free land under the federal Donation Land Act of 1850 – who "didn't want to have to compete with the institution of slavery," Millner said.

"The wagon train era also happened during the time of the Civil War, so race was the most important issue at the time," he said. "As controversies over slavery intensified during this time, many of those who settled West sought to exclude Blacks to avoid racial conflicts."

By excluding people of color from the ability to own land, the vision of a white homeland in Oregon was embedded in public policy, Millner said.

He said the hostile racial climate continued to dissuade Black people from moving to Oregon between the Civil War and the turn of the 20th century.

"When you look at the state's constitution in 1857, you will see that it goes beyond Black exclusion," Millner said. "It says that Blacks cannot legally own real estate in Oregon and that they're excluded from the court system, which means Blacks cannot participate in the judicial system or engage in business activities in Oregon."

It wasn't until the 1940s, when World War II turned the Portland area into a major shipbuilding hub, that tens of thousands of African Americans migrated to Portland to work in defense industries.

Millner said discrimination in housing and employment persisted through World War II for African Americans and other people of color. Outside of defense work, they faced limited career opportunities and restricted housing options in Portland, Millner said.

After World War II ended, Portland did not retain as many defense-related jobs as did Seattle, and many Black people who came to work in the shipyards left after those jobs dried up, Abbott said.

“Some of those workers and their families stayed in Portland, and some of them went back to the South, or to California, wherever they saw opportunities,” Abbott said.

Some went north to Seattle, which had less overtly racist views and offered more maritime jobs. Others moved to California, which offered railroad jobs and had better weather.

Black residents who decided to stay were restricted to live in North and Northeast Portland because of discriminatory housing.

OB Hill, a writer and community historian based in Portland, said his family was among those who moved from Alabama to Oregon, where his father found work in Portland’s booming shipbuilding industry during World War II.

Hill lived with his family in Vanport, a housing development built in just three months for the shipyard workers who flocked to the area during the war. At its peak, some 40,000 people lived in Vanport, including much of the city’s Black population.

But a catastrophic flood wiped out the development along the Columbia River in May 1948.

Hill points to the Vanport flood and the aftermath as a representation of how hard it was for Black families to put down roots in Portland during the 20th century. He said the flood caused many Vanport citizens to relocate.

“In Portland, the African American population is being moved around all the time. And stability is not something that goes from one generation to the next,” Hill said. “And I’ve witnessed this because I’ve experienced this.”

Disinvestment from the city and discriminatory development policies over several decades transformed the city’s historically Black neighborhoods in North and Northeast Portland.

While Portland’s Black population has remained relatively unchanged from 2010 to 2020, many close-in neighborhoods continued to see more Black residents leaving. The Black population in North and Northeast Portland declined by 13.5%, numbers from the 2020 census show.

North and Northeast Portland still have the highest concentration of Black residents of any part of the city, with nearly 11% of residents there identifying as Black or Black in combination with other races. But the share of Black residents on the eastern edge of the city and in pockets of Washington County has increased.

Moving to the suburbs

Portland residents identifying as Latino or Hispanic, or as two or more races, accounted for most of the city’s growth in the past decade.

Portland added about 70,000 residents during that span. Among those, about 17,500 identified as Latino or Hispanic, and about 23,600 identified as two or more races.

As a result, by the 2020 census about 11% of Portland residents identified as Hispanic/Latino and nearly 7% as multi-racial, which was much higher than in 2010 and previous years, said William Frey, a demographics expert with the Brookings Institution.

Frey said that is partly the result of changes in the 2020 census question about race and ethnicity, “which can explain why there are many more people who say they’re multiracial than before, and maybe it’s part of why the white population has gone down since 2010.”

The 2020 census used two separate questions to calculate race and ethnicity. One focused on Hispanic or Latino origin. The other focused specifically on race. The questionnaire included write-in boxes for Black or African American respondents for the first time, allowing them to list whether they are Haitian or Jamaican or Somali, for example. The surveys included similar boxes for white residents, allowing them to write in Lebanese or Egyptian or Italian.

Another part of Portland's shifting demographics, Frey said, is because of the city's proximity to Seattle and California, where Asians and Latino or Hispanic residents are highly represented. He said over the past two decades, Hispanic and Asian populations have been moving to more affordable areas adjacent to higher-priced coastal metro areas.

As a result of those changes, the city of Portland may no longer be labeled America's whitest by 2030, Frey said.

He said he believes continued population growth among Latinos and Asians on the West Coast will likely drop Portland from its current designation, and "Omaha is likely to displace Portland as the whitest city."

While Portland is currently the nation's whitest big city, that isn't and hasn't been true of the metro area as a whole – which includes all or part of Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington and Yamhill counties in Oregon and Clark and Skamania counties in Washington.

Among the nation's 50 most populous metros, the Portland area has the ninth highest share of white non-Hispanic residents, at 69%, 2020 census figures show. It is more diverse compared to metro areas in the Rust Belt, such as Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Buffalo, which remained mostly racially segregated with people of color living in the central city and white people in the suburbs. None of the eight whiter metro areas are in the West.

Frey said that's because Rust Belt areas have suffered population declines for decades, especially among younger groups, and don't attract as many Latinos and Asians as West Coast metro areas such as Portland. Frey said many of the less diverse Midwestern and Northeastern areas often don't have the jobs to attract people, either.

"Even though Portland is pretty white, it's still on the West Coast," he said. "Places in the Midwest or in the middle part of the Northeast, like Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Grand Rapids, Buffalo, Minneapolis, Providence, Louisville, St. Louis, Columbus, are seeing white suburbs. And I think that that's part because they're not getting as much of the kind of the new migrants, or new minorities coming into their places."

Washington County, long recognized as Oregon's most diverse county, became less white as the Hispanic/Latino and Asian populations grew. From 2010 to 2020, non-Hispanic whites dropped from 69.7% to 60.8% of the population, while Hispanics grew from 15.7% to 17.9%, and Asians from 8.6% to 11.4%, census data show.

Greg Contreras, director of the College Assistance Migrant Program at Portland Community College Rock Creek in Hillsboro, said Washington County has a strong and rich Hispanic and Latino community, which has roots in the region from when the U.S. government brought Mexican workers to Oregon during World War II.

"Since then, many families built a community in Washington County. And in doing so, they established a strong network of community support systems that helped new people moving here find work in all kinds of industries, get settled and retain cultural identity," he said.

"One of the things that makes Hillsboro an attractive place to live for Hispanics is the community feel, the neighborly vibe and how it's cost effective," he added.

Contreras himself is continuing the work of community building through his role as a board member of Mente, a nonprofit dedicated to connecting Latino teens in Oregon with higher education and future career opportunities. The nonprofit holds an annual conference featuring workshops taught by Latino professionals representing different fields such as public safety, education, health care and community organizing.

For Pamela Slaughter, the legacies of Oregon's racist history are reflected in what she sees in the lack of diversity and inclusion in outdoor spaces around Portland today.

Slaughter, founder of People of Color Outdoors, an organization that hosts outdoor recreational and educational events open only to Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color, said that lack of racial diversity in Portland can make it challenging for people of color to spend time in the outdoors.

"Portland's people of color don't really have a physical community to call home," she said. "Unlike most Oregonians, I don't always feel welcome or even safe outdoors in nature. Black people and other people of color sometimes experience verbal abuse, threatening behavior, and even physical attacks while enjoying the outdoors."

Slaughter's mother and grandparents were among those who moved to Portland in response to the urgent need for workers in the shipping industry during World War II, and they remained after Vanport was destroyed and they lost everything.

Despite what Mother Nature had done to the family's home, her family developed a love for the outdoors that went on to span generations. But several negative incidents while out on the trails with her family began to take a toll on Slaughter and she eventually stopped going out for years.

"After having just some really negative racist experiences, I just went online one day and googled 'Black people hiking together'... so I would have someone to go out with and feel safer," she said.

That led her to start a Portland chapter of Outdoor Afro in 2015, and then, eventually, People of Color Outdoors in 2017. Today, Slaughter's organization has over 3,000 members.

"I wanted to introduce people of color to the beauty Oregon had to offer," she said, "despite its ugly past."

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HEADLINE	10/02 Seattle sees extra dose of summer
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/seattle-sees-extra-dose-of-summer/
GIST	<p>Despite slowly yellowing leaves, the first days of October have cast Seattle in a warm glow of extended summer euphoria.</p> <p>Temperatures Sunday hit 80 degrees, breaking the record set in 1993, according to Jacob DeFlitch, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Seattle. On Saturday, temperatures reached a balmy 78 degrees at Seattle-Tacoma Airport.</p> <p>Monday could again hit 80 degrees, matching the record for that day, also set in 1993, DeFlitch said. While Tuesday and Wednesday will see a 5-degree drop — cooled by early morning fog and low clouds — unseasonably warm temperatures are expected through next weekend.</p> <p>"What a delight," said Mike McFarland, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Seattle. "Around here, if we get any extra summery weather into the fall, that is just a bonus."</p> <p>With little wind, the only element that obscured the bright blue skies this weekend was a settling haze from the Bolt Creek fire that sparked two weeks ago near Skykomish.</p>

Smoke from the Bolt Creek fire was causing hazy skies in Redmond, Bellevue, Renton and Kent on Sunday, according to data from the Washington Smoke Blog, a partnership between government agencies to monitor areas affected by wildfires.

Still, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency said Sunday the air quality was expected to be good to moderate. With calm winds, the “smoke will likely stay around,” the agency said.

July and August are the only months typically consistent with summer weather for Seattle, McFarland said. Last year, September was marked with above-average rain and temperatures began to fall below 80 by the second week of the month.

This year, the warm days have not only passed the Sept. 22 autumnal equinox but are expected to continue through Oct. 10, when meteorologists say the city can expect its first fall rain. Until then, the next eight days are likely to continue to see highs in the 70s, and only moderate fog and low clouds.

“We have certainly had late starts to the fall before,” McFarland noted. “It’s nothing to get too excited about.”

The warm weather is being created by a typical summer weather pattern, he said, called an upper ridge, which is a pooling of warm, dry air mass. Winter, meanwhile, is defined by cold, wet “troughs.”

By November, Washington is expected to see its third La Niña year in a row, with colder than average temperatures and average precipitation.

“That is ideal for me,” McFarland said. “I am looking forward to this winter. I hope we will see a little snow.”

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HEADLINE	10/02 Youth crews protect homes from wildfires
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/northwest/youth-crews-help-protect-homes-from-wildfire-thanks-to-state-funded-training/
GIST	<p><i>oregonlive.com</i> - Lindsay Nava hauls branches up a long wooded driveway near Grants Pass under the roasting midday sun. Her blond hair, tucked into braids and bound back with a bandanna, poked out from underneath her orange hard hat while she felled trees and limbs, building a pile to turn into wood chips.</p> <p>Nava, 22, is on a five-person team of young people working to clear fire hazards from around homes and buildings in southern Oregon, through a new effort funded by the Legislature in 2021 as part of a sweeping \$195 million package to boost Oregon’s wildfire preparedness. The Oregon Conservation Corps program allows young people to develop the skills to become wildland firefighters and land managers while helping vulnerable communities mitigate fire risks. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission, which distributes the funds, expects nearly 400 corps members ages 16 to 26 to work on crews overseen by tribes, schools and nonprofits around the state.</p> <p>Crew members on Nava’s Northwest Youth Corps receive a \$4,235 stipend and \$1,678 for school costs during their 10-week assignments, during which they camp near their worksites. The crews learn to use chain saws and power tools and take courses that prepare them to test for a “red card,” an industry certification to become wildland firefighters.</p> <p>That’s why Nava is here.</p> <p>Nava graduated from Northern Arizona University this spring with a degree in public relations. She’s decided instead to go into wildland firefighting, the field her dad works in. But she wanted to learn the ropes on her own.</p>

“It just seemed like the perfect opportunity for me to put my toes in the water before I jump into fire,” Nava said.

National agencies have struggled during the pandemic to find staff to fill wildfire crews, The [Salem Statesman Journal](#) reported. Oregon senators are [campaigning](#) to boost firefighter workforce and wages and to treat Western landscapes to reduce fire danger. Oregon’s youth crews help with mitigation work while training to potentially enter that career.

Watching for “widowmakers”

As the southern Oregon sky turned from pink to blue Tuesday morning, Lin Boyea’s crew of six headed to work.

The Josephine County areas where her crew worked last week are among those most in danger of wildfires. The cities of Merlin and Grants Pass were both ranked near the top of an Oregon [community wildfire risk assessment](#) compiled by Montana firm Pyrologix. Just last month, the [Rum Creek](#) fire burned over 20,000 acres on the Rogue River, about 5 miles northwest of where Boyea’s crew gathered Tuesday at a manufactured home in the wooded hills.

At the start of every workday, Boyea leads the crew in a “safety circle,” during which each team member leads a stretch and shares a concern.

Ben Mitchell, 22, warned his team about bees. He narrowly avoided getting stung when he put his knee in a hive the day before, potentially because they couldn’t penetrate the Kevlar work chaps the team wears to protect themselves from chain saw mishaps.

Boyea was concerned about “widowmakers,” a forestry term for dead tree limbs that can fall and potentially kill.

“Just make sure you are wearing your hard hat,” Boyea told her crew.

Boyea, 27, worked as a youth social worker before signing up to lead a Community Wildfire Protection Corps team through nonprofit Northwest Youth Corps, which started the new fire mitigation crew with the state’s funding. She was stunned by the intensity of the 2020 Holiday Farm fire, near Eugene. It was the first time Boyea, who is from Colorado, had seen ash rain from the sky. She’s found a new niche in the intersection of conservation and youth empowerment.

“This wasn’t something I had planned on doing with my degree,” she said. “It was something I started doing and really loved.”

Boyea’s crew has a recent psychology grad and a former security guard, a prospective firefighter exploring the country through AmeriCorps and a former Seattle youth services worker. For some, the job is a summer service project, or a stopover until they decide what comes next. For others, it’s the beginning of a new career.

Chito Romero first signed up for other outdoor conservation projects with Northwest Youth Corps at 16. His mom pushed him to do the projects, to stay out of trouble for the summer. At 21, he’s back on the adult fire crew as he considers a career as a park ranger.

Romero grabs a chain saw to chop up a pine tree he’d felled the day before. The crew takes out trees that lean against structures and trims branches too close to the ground. They target “ladder-fuels,” like shrubs or low limbs, that could lead a fire from burning on the ground up into the treetops.

Northwest Youth Corps crews will clean up 100 feet in any direction of a home or structure, said community wildfire protection corps coordinator Alicia Rabideau, but focus most intensely on clearing the first 30 feet around homes to create a buffer of “defensible space” from flammable material.

The crew's efforts are an attempt to keep homes and communities from burning down if a fire breaks out, an escalating threat as climate change and drought intensify the severity of wildfires.

"We're trying to protect people's livelihoods and communities and make it safe to escape," Rabideau said.

As Romero cuts, others pick up the branches he's removed and take them to the chipper. Boyea mans the expensive machine while Mitchell and crew members Kellan Beckham and Rae Thoma feed it trunks that spew out the side like pine-scented rain.

On-the-job training entails more than just technical skills, Boyea said. The crew talks through conflict management and communication and a large part of Boyea's focus with a prior crew was on mental health, she said.

"This work is challenging and stressful and we have to find a way to build community within that," she said.

Vulnerable populations

Oregon Conservation Corps grantees focus on supporting populations with "greater vulnerability," said Doug Denning, director of youth workforce development for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. That includes communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with limited English proficiency and low-income communities.

Northwest Youth Corps works with local area fire departments, which recommend property owners who need help with clearing fire hazards and perhaps struggle physically or financially to get that done.

Katy Callies, 54, didn't think she'd made the list. Homeowners in the rural Grants Pass area got a letter about the wildfire prevention cleanup this spring, and though she signed up right away, the slots were full. Then, a crew called her last Monday to say they had availability.

Callies owns over 4 acres on a hilly plot 3 miles southwest of Merlin with a home, studio and garage. She has multiple sclerosis and her husband has shoulder troubles, she said, which limits how much fire maintenance they can do themselves.

"We definitely needed the crews to come help," she said.

The family has hired companies to help with fire mitigation work before, Callies said, but it's expensive: Over \$2,000 to have someone cut down six dead trees, and at least \$1,000 for a crew to bulldoze a fire break, mowing over small trees to try to create a fireproof barrier around the house.

Callies knows the risk. Her family has been ready to evacuate twice in recent years, including last month during the Rum Creek fire.

Having a crew do what it can to reduce the risk to her house gives Callies some peace of mind.

"You can never be totally comfortable when there are fires nearby, but at least having done what needs to be done will help," Callies said.

Nava and her team member Diego Velazquez took turns felling small trees, paying particular attention to the steep driveway. Part of the crews' focus is to make driveways safe enough that firefighters could drive up to defend a home, without concern that their path could be blocked by fire.

The outdoor work feels like "going home" for Velazquez, 21, who used to help his dad's landscaping company. Velazquez stumbled upon a poster advertising the summer work when he was walking through downtown Ashland. The print shop where he was working was about to close and he needed a new job. He might have found a new calling.

	<p>During a training session, Velazquez learned about fireline explosives crew members, who use explosives to fell hazard trees or help stop fires. He is investigating that as a potential career path.</p> <p>“That sounded really cool to me,” Velazquez said.</p> <p>Nava also sees the corps as the first step toward her new career and a way to train for her red card for free.</p> <p>Despite her dad’s career in firefighting, she was intimidated about entering the field. She felt she didn’t know enough about chain saws and worried she wouldn’t be strong enough for the work.</p> <p>On Tuesday, Nava strapped on the backpack-like pole saw to cut low-hanging limbs from trees, before taking up the chain saw to cut trunks. She’s far more comfortable with the tools now and getting stronger. Each day, she can work a bit longer before fatigue hits. She wants to be at peak performance before she takes on the physical fitness test to earn her wildland firefighting credentials.</p> <p>“I feel less intimidated now and more excited,” she said, “like I’m on the right path.”</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Blood supply ‘dangerously low’ western WA
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/blood-supply-dangerously-low-in-western-washington-and-oregon/
GIST	<p>The Columbian - Blood donations are down close to 50% at Bloodworks Northwest, the supplier of 95% of the donated blood in Western Washington and Oregon.</p> <p>Lauren Reagan, community engagement liaison for the Vancouver branch of Bloodworks Northwest, said the organization is seeking 1,000 donations a day at its 12 locations across Washington — several in the Seattle area — and Oregon.</p> <p>Currently, only 30% of the donors needed in October have booked appointments, creating a need for over 14,000 more donations before Oct. 31, according to a news release.</p> <p>One key strategy that staff at Bloodworks Northwest hope will bolster donations is campus visits. This year, mobile donation vans will make the rounds to high schools and colleges throughout Western Washington and Oregon for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Reagan said Bloodworks Northwest hopes to bring on 10,000 new donors this school year.</p> <p>Prior to the pandemic shutting down schools and mobile blood donations, 16- to 25-year-olds made up about 20% of blood donors through Bloodworks Northwest, according to Reagan.</p> <p>“So, we are holding a lot of hope that these high school students can make a huge impact,” she said.</p> <p>The goal at Bloodworks Northwest is to remain in the “green zone,” with enough donated blood to have a three-day supply in back stock. That requires 1,000 donations a day.</p> <p>Despite a need for more donors, Bloodworks Northwest shipped an emergency supply of 30 units of blood to SunCoast Blood Centers in Florida last week, in preparation for the potential need in response to Hurricane Ian.</p> <p>“While our Type O supplies are tight, this is a need we must respond to,” Curt Bailey, Bloodworks president and CEO, said in a news release. “Florida is facing an extremely dangerous situation, and it’s critical we help them, just as they would help us in our own time of need.”</p> <p>Type O negative blood is the most-needed blood type in a trauma situation because it is the universal blood type for emergency transfusions, according to Reagan.</p>

In May, Bloodworks Northwest joined 30 blood centers across the country in forming the Blood Emergency Readiness Corps, to help ensure there is a large blood supply following a multiple-injury, mass-transfusion event such as a school shooting, according to a news release.

For Bloodworks Northwest, this means committing to store an extra 15 units of type O negative and type O positive blood on a rotating schedule so it can be available to all Blood Emergency Readiness Corps members in case of an emergency.

As the regional pool of blood donors remains low, not having an excess supply in case of an emergency can be worrisome.

“Our community is running dangerously low on the platelets and Type O blood needed to supply local hospitals, straining our ability to provide transfusions for every cancer and surgery patient who need them,” Bailey said in a news release. “If a mass trauma event were to happen today, we would not have enough blood available to help everyone who needs it. It is vital people donate blood to support everyday needs of patients as well as unforeseen emergencies.”

Eligible people can donate blood every 56 days and are encouraged to continue to donate as often as they are able to, according to Reagan.

While preparing to donate blood, she recommends hydrating in the 24 hours leading up to the donation, eating a high-sodium meal the night before and eating a full meal two hours before the actual blood draw.

The donation process usually takes around an hour, though only about seven to 10 minutes of that is the actual blood draw, according to Reagan.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Russia demoralized troops fled key city
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/02/world/europe/ukraine-russia-lyman.html
GIST	<p>KRAMATORSK, Ukraine — Ukrainian forces on Sunday hunted Russian stragglers in the key city of Lyman, which was taken back from Russia after its demoralized troops, according to a major Russian newspaper, fled with “empty eyes,” and despite Moscow’s baseless claim it had annexed the region surrounding the city.</p> <p>Two days after President Vladimir V. Putin held a grandiose ceremony to commemorate the incorporation of four Ukrainian territories into Russia, the debacle in the city — Lyman, a strategic railway hub in the eastern region of Donbas — ratcheted up pressure on a Russian leadership already facing withering criticism at home for its handling of the war and its conscription of up to 300,000 men into military service.</p> <p>Russia’s retreat from Lyman, which sits on a riverbank that has served as a natural division between the Russian and Ukrainian front lines, came after weeks of fierce fighting.</p> <p>In an unusually candid article published Sunday, the prominent Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda reported that in the last few days of their occupation, Russian forces in Lyman had been plagued by desertion, poor planning and the delayed arrival of reserves.</p> <p>“The risk of encirclement or shameful imprisonment became too great, and the Russian command made a decision to fall back,” a war correspondent traveling with the fleeing Russian forces wrote, adding that dispirited soldiers with “empty eyes” had barely escaped Lyman with their lives.</p> <p>The retreat is a significant blow to Russian forces that could further undermine the Kremlin’s position in Donbas, a mineral-rich and fertile part of eastern Ukraine that has been central to Mr. Putin’s war aims.</p>

Mr. Putin's office made no public comment about the loss of Lyman, even as pro-war commentators and two of his closest allies [sharply criticized](#) the Defense Ministry for retreating from the city. Seemingly unfazed by its military setbacks, Moscow pressed ahead with its annexation effort on Sunday, as the country's rubber-stamp Constitutional Court [formally accepted](#) Mr. Putin's decision to claim the four Ukrainian regions as part of Russia.

But President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine quickly sought to capitalize politically on the retreat, saying it showed that Moscow's attempt to illegally annex a sizable part of the country was an "absolute farce" and that "now a Ukrainian flag is" in Donbas. But the Ukrainian recoveries in areas Russia now claims have come as Mr. Putin has increasingly [hinted at turning to nuclear options](#) in the conflict, alarming American officials.

On Friday, after Russian-appointed officials held discredited referendums in the four partly occupied areas of Ukraine, Mr. Putin [announced](#) that the territory, including Lyman, would be absorbed into Russia and that its people would be Russian citizens "forever."

Mr. Putin claimed the provinces' residents had voted overwhelmingly to join the Russian Federation, but Ukraine and its Western allies dismissed the referendums as shams, as most of the citizens had fled the region and many of those left behind had cast ballots at gunpoint.

Despite the Russian leader's claims and bluster at the ceremony on Friday in a grand Kremlin hall — he denounced Washington for "Satanism" — Russian troops retreated from Lyman barely a day later.

Initially, Ukrainian commanders thought they would retake Lyman quickly, with forces nearly completely encircling the city. But Russia's military sent reinforcements. Fierce fighting ensued in dense forests and along the banks of the Siverskyi Donets River as Ukraine cut off the roads used to move troops and ammunition into the city.

"In Lyman and around it, there were significantly strong forces," Col. Sergei Cherevaty, a spokesman for Ukrainian troops fighting in the east, said in an interview.

Russian soldiers retreated chaotically, breaking from their units and escaping in smaller groups into the surrounding forests, Colonel Cherevaty said, and many were killed or captured. About 2,000 to 3,000 Russian soldiers were in Lyman as Ukrainian forces arrived on the outskirts of the city on Friday, he said.

As Ukrainian soldiers and police officers fanned out across Lyman to search for Russian stragglers, it was unclear on Sunday how many had fallen into Ukrainian hands.

Mr. Zelensky said the city had been fully cleared by Sunday afternoon, as Ukrainian forces conducted patrols and delivered aid to residents who had survived months of Russian occupation and weeks of combat.

Artillery strikes have damaged much of Lyman. The city lies largely in ruins, without electricity, water or regular food supplies, according to Stanislav Zagrusky, the police chief of the Kramatorsk District, which includes Lyman.

Mr. Zagrusky said in an interview that the resumption of Ukrainian police patrols late on Saturday — hours after the Ukrainian Army declared the city liberated and Russia's military conceded that it had retreated — underlined the absurdity of the Kremlin's claim of sovereignty over the four Ukrainian territories.

"We absolutely don't care what they say, what decrees they issue, what announcements they make," he said of the Kremlin authorities, deploring the conditions in which Russian troops had left residents of Lyman during the occupation: "They did absolutely nothing for the people all this time."

“They didn’t try to restore electricity or water, and people lived without regular food supplies,” he went on, adding that many residents needed medical care.

Mr. Zagrusky said that while the Ukrainian military took prisoners after the battle, police officers had made no arrests of Russian stragglers as of midday Sunday. His officers found that Russians had hastily abandoned a police station, leaving it littered with garbage.

The police said about 5,000 people remained in the city, which had a prewar population of 20,000.

As Ukrainian forces gained full control of Lyman, commanders turned their attention to the next steps in a punishing offensive that has left Russian troops in the eastern Donbas region in an increasingly perilous position.

From Lyman, Ukraine could push farther east to try to expel Russian troops from towns and villages they had seized over the summer, though colder temperatures could slow the fighting and Russian lines are expected to be reinforced by newly drafted troops.

Military analysts also warn that Ukrainian forces, if they push too far, could become overstretched and unable to defend newly reclaimed territory from Russian counterattacks.

None of the four illegally annexed regions are fully under Russian control. Ukrainian gains in the east and south have left the Kremlin’s forces with diminishing options for taking additional territory.

In the south, Ukrainian forces are engaged in a [fierce counteroffensive in the Kherson region](#), which Russia seized in the first weeks of the war. Unlike in the northeast, there has been little movement in either direction, though odds increasingly appear to be stacked against Russian forces, the bulk of which have been cut off from their supply lines by successful Ukrainian attacks on key bridges spanning the vast Dnipro River.

On the other side of the Dnipro, Russian forces trying to push north in the Zaporizhzhia region, which Mr. Putin also claimed to have annexed, have been held at a standstill for months by strong Ukrainian defensive lines.

For now, Russian troops fleeing Lyman appear to be moving to reinforce their lines 25 miles to the south around the city of Bakhmut. That appears to be the only area along the extensive eastern front line where Russian forces are on the offensive, led primarily by members of the [Wagner Group](#), a private military contractor, whose fighters have been pummeling Ukrainian forces for months.

“It’s very difficult because they have been hammering for several months with artillery and are constantly attacking with tanks and infantry,” Colonel Cherevaty said. “Holding them is difficult, but they’re managing.”

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HEADLINE	10/02 Denmark: 3 gas pipeline leaks stopped
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/03/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#nord-stream-pipeline-damage-russia
GIST	<p>Leaks from the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines have finally stopped after three separate ruptures were discovered in the natural gas lines last week, the Danish Energy Agency said on Sunday.</p> <p>Nord Stream AG, the company that manages the pipeline, told the agency that “a stable pressure now appears to have been achieved on the two Nord Stream 1 pipelines,” meaning that gas is no longer flowing out of them, the agency said in a statement on Twitter.</p> <p>The two major lines — which were built to deliver natural gas from Russia to Germany — ruptured in three separate places last week after explosions under the Baltic Sea.</p>

Although the official cause has not been identified, political leaders in Europe and the United States have suggested that the incident was an act of sabotage, as much of the speculation about responsibility has focused on Russia, whose state-controlled energy company, Gazprom, is the main owner of the pipelines.

A spokesman for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, Dmitri S. Peskov, dismissed the notion of Russian sabotage as “stupid” and suggested that the United States was behind the attacks.

Neither pipeline was actively transporting gas at the time, but they still contained methane, the main component of natural gas. The leaking gas [produced a half-mile wide stream of bubbles](#) near Denmark and Sweden, raising questions about the incident’s [environmental impact](#). Though methane partly dissolves in water and is not toxic, it is a greenhouse gas.

The pipelines have featured in the conflict over Russia’s invasion of Ukraine for months.

The German government shelved the Nord Stream 2 project in February, just as Russia began to invade Ukraine. And Nord Stream 1 appears to be part of a larger Russian strategy of leveraging energy against Europe [as punishment](#) for opposing the war.

Nord Stream 1 has not moved gas into Europe for weeks, with Russia citing maintenance reasons for closing the line. Europe widely interprets the shut-off as a threat that Mr. Putin could cut Ukraine’s allies off as winter approaches.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Police trade badges for political office run
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/2/sick-being-scapegoated-police-nationwide-are-tradi/
GIST	<p>America’s cops are fed up.</p> <p>They say they have been defunded, scapegoated as violent racists, vilified for the mistakes of a few rogue officers and challenged by sharp increases in shootings and homicides.</p> <p>Now some are pushing back in a way they never expected: by walking off the job to run for elected office.</p> <p>More than 100 current or former police officers are on ballots this year for federal, state and local offices. Nearly all are running as Republicans.</p> <p>The officers, some who have never before run for office, call the movement “the common-sense wave.”</p> <p>“There has been a war waged against law enforcement by Democrats and the far left, and those of us who have worn the uniform, those of us that have respected law enforcement our entire lives, just can’t sit back anymore,” said Anthony D’Esposito, a former New York Police Department detective who is running to represent a portion of Nassau County in Congress.</p> <p>The officers running for elected office have largely paralleled the Republican Party’s broader strategy of labeling Democrats as soft on crime. Republicans think the argument will win them control of the House and Senate while the nation is awash in violent crime.</p> <p>Alison Esposito, a former NYPD deputy inspector, retired this summer after 25 years on the job. She is the Republican nominee for lieutenant governor of New York alongside Rep. Lee Zeldin, the party’s nominee for governor.</p> <p>The second-generation cop had stints in plainclothes and anti-gang units before rising to become the commanding officer of Brooklyn’s 70th Precinct.</p>

Ms. Esposito never thought about jumping into politics, but she couldn't sit on the sidelines after witnessing firsthand New York's post-pandemic crime surge.

"I never wanted to retire, but I was watching the city that I love in turmoil, and I realized I was sitting in the wrong seat and wearing the wrong hat to effect the type of change New York so desperately needs," Ms. Esposito said.

Across the nation, former police officers are rising up to voice concerns of their brothers and sisters in the halls of government. They say their voices are desperately needed to drown out anti-police rhetoric.

The former officers say their law enforcement backgrounds lend potent arguments to voters when homicide rates in nearly two dozen cities are roughly 40% higher than they were before the pandemic, according to the Council on Criminal Justice. The officers say they have witnessed how less-stringent criminal justice policies have sparked the violence.

Former cops are on ballots in all kinds of races across the country, but their campaigns are largely similar. Most are running as Republicans with a law-and-order platform seeking to unseat Democratic incumbents.

In Virginia, former police officer and sheriff Yesli Vega is campaigning against Rep. Abigail Spanberger, a Democrat.

La'Ron Singletary, a former police chief in Rochester, New York, resigned from the force to challenge Rep. Joseph Morelle, a Democrat.

So many officers in suburban Pittsburgh are pursuing local positions, including school board and district justice, that it sparked a debate about a state law banning civil servants from holding office.

"This is not a red wave or a blue wave. It is a common-sense wave," Ms. Esposito said. "It is people who never ran for office before standing up and saying, 'Enough.' Freedom and public safety and security are on the ballot, and so is common sense."

NEW YORK EPICENTER

New York state appears to be the epicenter of this trend. At least 11 former police officers and five immediate family members of current officers are running for state and federal positions. Another two mounted campaigns this year but were eliminated in their primary races.

New York state legislators in recent years have approved a series of bills aimed at reducing jail and prison populations, including laws eliminating cash bail for low-level nonviolent crimes such as arson, robbery, burglary and drug offenses.

The Republican former cops have hammered the legislature and Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, over bail reform. They say too many criminals have been released only to commit more severe offenses.

Statistics released Sept. 21 by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services did little to appease either side.

The data showed that monthly rearrest rates statewide rose sharply starting in late 2019 when judges began applying bail reform.

Statistics released Aug. 3 by New York City Mayor Eric Adams, a Democrat, concluded that burglary suspects arrested on other felony charges within 60 days jumped to 25.1% this year, compared with 7.7% in 2017. That works out to roughly 373 people rearrested this year by the NYPD.

Other crimes deemed to be low level for cashless bail also showed marked increases in rearrest rates. Felony rearrests for defendants accused of grand larceny jumped to 16.8% this year from 6.5% in 2017. Felony rearrests on shoplifting charges rose to 21.2% in 2022, compared with 8.1% in 2017.

Democrats said Mr. Adams' numbers don't indicate how many of those were assigned bail. Instead, they point to data from the New York State Unified Court System, which suggests that people released without bail reoffend at the same rate as those held on bail.

Those numbers show that an average of 9.6% of people arraigned on misdemeanor charges statewide have reoffended since 2020. Of that total, 7% were charged with nonviolent felonies and 2.6% were rearrested and charged with violent felonies.

"I think there is, obviously, disagreement on the numbers, but common sense says this increase in crime, the increase in violent crime, is directly tied to bail reform," said Scott Marciszewski, a retired police officer running as a Republican for a New York State Assembly seat representing suburban Buffalo. "The criminals know when they are apprehended there will be no accountability."

When he knocks on doors, he said, all voters want to talk about is "crime, crime, crime."

Mr. Marciszewski pointed to nearby Kenmore, New York, which recorded its first homicide in years. He said the town was nicknamed "Mayberry" in reference to the quaint town that served as the setting for "The Andy Griffith Show."

If elected, Mr. Marciszewski said, his first goal will be to repeal New York's cashless bail laws.

CANDIDATES DOVETAIL WITH REPUBLICAN STRATEGY

A Washington Post/ABC News poll released last week found that 56% of voters said they trust Republicans more to handle crime, while 34% said they trust Democrats more on the issue.

The former officers are seizing on that gap on the campaign trail, where they highlight incidents of violence and horrifying crimes.

At a press conference last month, Ms. Esposito and Mr. Zeldin detailed the story of Scott Saracina, who was released without bail in February on charges of harassing and stalking a woman. He was rearrested in August on charges of abducting and raping a woman.

During the first three weeks of September, Republican candidates across the country aired 53,000 commercials on crime, according to data from AdImpact, which tracks political messaging on television.

Crime has long been a political liability for Democrats, and Republican messaging has put them on the defensive. Several top Democrats have scrambled to distance themselves from the defund-the-police movement. Even President Biden has called for more cops on the streets.

At the same time, the emphasis on crime has sparked criticism that the officers are single-issue candidates avoiding tougher political fights on issues such as inflation and abortion. The officers strongly reject such criticism.

"I don't know a single former police officer that is running a single-issue candidacy," said James Coll, a retired NYPD detective running for New York state Senate. "They are campaigning on issues across the board from high taxes to COVID restrictions to state budgets that spend money on things that we don't need."

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SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/03/iran-protests-riot-police-clash-with-students-at-sharif-university
GIST	<p>Iranian security forces have clashed with students at a prominent university in Tehran, social and state media reported, in the latest sign of a deadly clampdown on nationwide protests that were ignited by the death in custody of a young woman.</p> <p>The anti-government protests, which began at 22-year-old Mahsa Amini's funeral on 17 September in the Kurdish town of Saez, have spiralled into the biggest show of opposition to Iran's authorities in years, with many calling for the end of more than four decades of Islamic clerical rule.</p> <p>Activist Twitter account 1500tasvir, which has about 160,000 followers, posted several videos showing Sharif University, traditionally a hotbed of dissent, surrounded by dozens of riot police on Sunday.</p> <p>One of the videos showed security forces firing teargas to drive the students off the campus and the sound of what appeared to be shooting at a distance could be heard.</p> <p>Another video showed security forces chasing dozens of students trapped in the university's underground parking. The account said dozens of students had been arrested.</p> <p>Iranian state media described "reports of clashes" at the university and said the country's science minister visited the campus to check on the situation.</p> <p>Reuters could not independently verify the events at the university.</p> <p>Students had been protesting at numerous universities on Sunday and demonstrations were held in several cities such as Tehran, Yazd, Kermanshah, Sanandaj, Shiraz and Mashhad, with participants chanting "independence, freedom, death to Khamenei," earlier social media posts showed.</p> <p>The protests have not abated despite a growing death toll and the crackdown by security forces using teargas, clubs, and in some cases, according to videos on social media and rights groups, live ammunition.</p> <p>Iran Human Rights, a Norway-based group, in a statement said that "so far 133 people had been killed across Iran", including more than 40 people it said died in clashes last week in Zahedan, capital of the south-eastern Sistan-Baluchistan province.</p> <p>Iranian authorities have not given a death toll, while saying many members of the security forces have been killed by "rioters and thugs backed by foreign foes". Last week state television said 41 had died, including members of the security forces.</p> <p>Iran's utmost authority Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has not commented on the nationwide protests, which have spread to Iran's 31 provinces, with all layers of society, including ethnic and religious minorities, taking part.</p> <p>Amini's death and the crackdown have drawn international criticism of Iran's rulers, who in turn accuse the United States and some European countries of exploiting the unrest to try to destabilise the Islamic Republic.</p> <p>Iranian state media shared a video of pro-government students, who gathered at the Ferdowsi university in Mashhad, chanting "the Islamic Republic is our red line".</p> <p>Earlier on Sunday, Iranian lawmakers chanted "thank you, police" during a parliament session, in a show of support for a crackdown on widespread anti-government protests.</p> <p>Amini was arrested on 13 September in Tehran for "unsuitable attire" by the morality police who enforce the Islamic Republic's strict dress code. She died three days later in hospital after falling into a coma.</p>

	<p>The lawyer for Amini's family, Saleh Nikbakht, told the semi-official Etemadonline news website that "respectable doctors" believe she was hit in custody. Amini's autopsy report and other medical details have not been released, but her father said he saw bruises on her leg and that other women detained with her said she was beaten.</p> <p>Iran's police authorities say Amini died of a heart attack and deny she was beaten to death in custody.</p> <p>The country's hardline president Ebrahim Raisi has ordered an investigation into Amini's death. He said last week that a forensic report would be presented in "coming days".</p> <p>Amnesty International on Friday reported that hundreds were injured and thousands have been arrested in the protests.</p> <p>State media said at least 20 people were killed in the Zahedan clashes, blaming a separatist group from the Baluchi minority for starting a shootout in the city.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/03 Day 222 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/03/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-222-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US and its allies would destroy Russia's troops and equipment in Ukraine and sink its Black Sea fleet if Russian president Vladimir Putin uses nuclear weapons, former CIA director and retired four-star army general David Petraeus said on Sunday. Petraeus said that he had not spoken to national security adviser Jake Sullivan on the likely US reaction, but he told ABC News that he believed a nuclear attack by Russia in Ukraine would trigger a Nato response led by the US. "You don't want to, again, get into a nuclear escalation here. But you have to show that this cannot be accepted in any way," Petraeus said. • Volodymyr Zelenskiy confirmed Ukraine has "fully cleared" Russian forces from the key eastern city of Lyman, a day after Moscow admitted its troops had pulled out after they were encircled. In a short video clip on his Telegram channel, Ukraine's president thanked serving Ukrainian troops for liberating Lyman. • The UK Ministry of Defence has described the city of Lyman as strategically crucial, owing to its "key road crossing over the Siverskyi Donets River, behind which Russia has been attempting to consolidate its defences". • Ukraine's prime minister, Denys Smyhal, says that 900 Ukrainian teachers have volunteered to join Ukraine's Armed Forces to fight against Russia's invasion since 24 February. "This is a great example of serving your people," he said. • The body of Paul Urey, a British air volunteer who died after being captured by pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine has been returned to the UK. Urey's family raised £9,000 to repatriate his body after the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said it was unable to pay the transport costs. • A leading UK charity that has been helping the government rematch Ukrainian refugees with hosts after initial placements end or break down is to scale back its operations because it says the scheme is unworkable. Hosting arrangements are for a minimum of six months and many are coming to an end after the scheme opened in March. • Ukrainian forces shot down eight Iranian-made kamikaze drones on Sunday, according to the Kyiv Independent. According to the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Ukraine's air force also carried out four strikes that hit two Russian weapon stockpiles, as well as two anti-aircraft missile systems. • US secretary of defense Lloyd Austin has said that he believes Ukraine is "making progress" in the war. In a CNN interview that aired on Sunday, Austin attributes the changing tide of war to the calibre of Ukrainian soldiers and their use of weapons provided to them by the US and Nato countries. • Ukraine is starting to believe it can take back Crimea, according to Volodymyr Zelenskiy's top representative in the region. While there's no suggestion that Ukraine is close to being in a

	<p>position to regain the annexed region, Tamila Tasheva and her team spend their days discussing the logistics of what would happen should Kyiv regain control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nine European countries who issued a statement earlier to condemn Russia's annexation of Ukraine were all signalling their support for Ukraine to join Nato. The Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania and Slovakia were backing a path for Ukraine's Nato membership in their slightly opaque joint statement. • The Associated Press has found evidence of 10 torture sites in the city of Izium, following Russia's retreat. "The AP spoke to 15 survivors of Russian torture in the Kharkiv region, as well as two families whose loved ones disappeared into Russian hands," the AP reported. • Russia's constitutional court has recognised the annexation of four key Ukrainian territories as lawful. The court has effectively rubber stamped the annexation accords signed by Vladimir Putin with the Moscow-backed leaders of the regions, despite widespread condemnation by the West. • Germany, Denmark and Norway have commissioned a batch of long-range weapons to be built for Ukraine. The supply of 16 Slovak Zuzana-2 howitzers, just announced by the German defence ministry, will begin next year. • The gas leaks on the damaged Nord Stream 1 pipeline have now stopped. This follows Saturday's announcement that gas was no longer flowing out of Nord Stream 2. Denmark's energy agency said on Sunday it had been informed by Nord Stream AG that stable pressure had been achieved in the damaged Nord Stream 1 pipeline and that this indicates the outflow of natural gas from the last leaks had now halted, Reuters reports.
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HEADLINE	10/02 Day 221 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/02/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-221-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia suffered a humiliating military defeat on Saturday when Ukrainian troops liberated the key eastern city of Lyman, with videos showing them raising a national flag and performing a victory dance. Russia's ministry of defence admitted its soldiers had retreated. They had been "withdrawn to more advantageous lines", the ministry said, after their encirclement by Ukrainian forces. The defeat is an embarrassment for Vladimir Putin, who declared on Friday that the city – in the Donetsk region – was Russia's "for ever". • Germany's defence minister, Christine Lambrecht, made a surprise visit to Ukraine – her first since Russia's invasion in February – as Kyiv urged Berlin to send it battle tanks. Lambrecht visited the southern port city of Odesa on Saturday and met her Ukrainian counterpart, Oleksii Reznikov, the German defence ministry said. • The Nord Stream 2 pipeline is no longer leaking under the Baltic Sea because an equilibrium has been reached between the gas and water pressure, pipeline spokesman Ulrich Lissek told AFP. The British prime minister, Liz Truss, has said the series of explosions that severely damaged Russia's gas pipelines were an act of sabotage. • Belarus is preparing to receive Russian soldiers and equipment, the Kyiv Independent reports. There are about 1,000 Russian soldiers in the country. • Ukraine's ambassador to Canada said her country held Russia to account for violating Ukraine's sovereign airspace by bombing airports, which goes against the 1944 agreement setting out core principles for global aviation. Yuliya Kovaliv told Reuters it was important that all members of the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) addressed "such a drastic breach of the Chicago convention". • Russia failed to win enough votes for re-election to the ICAO's governing council. The French representative told the assembly after Saturday's ballot: "When we have votes in our countries, if we don't like the result, we don't ask for another vote." Russia had a place on the UN aviation agency's 36-member council as one of the "states of chief importance in air transport". • The head of Russia's region of Chechnya said Moscow should consider using a low-yield nuclear weapon in Ukraine after its battlefield defeat in Lyman. Ramzan Kadyrov said in a message on Telegram addressing Russia's loss of its stronghold: "In my personal opinion, more

	<p>drastic measures should be taken, right up to the declaration of martial law in the border areas and the use of low-yield nuclear weapons.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A superyacht built for an oligarch under sanctions is being discreetly offered for sale for £26m (\$29m), with buyers advised that any viewings will be in the Maldives in the Indian Ocean. Brokers are being warned that the sale of MySky, built for Igor Kesaev – sanctioned over the supply of weapons to the Russian army – should not be advertised online. • Russia has accused the International Olympic Committee president, Thomas Bach, of violating the game’s principles by suggesting that Russian athletes might be allowed to return to competition provided they did not support the invasion of Ukraine. Bach told Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera: “This war has not been started by the Russian athletes.” • Russian authorities informed the International Atomic Energy Agency that the head of Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant was “temporarily detained” for questioning. Ihor Murashov was detained on his way from the Russian-occupied plant – Europe’s largest – to the town of Enerhodar at about 4pm on Friday. Russia is trying to transfer the Zaporizhzhia plant to the Russian energy firm Rosatom, the head of Ukraine’s atomic energy company, Petro Kotin, has told the BBC. • Kharkiv oblast’s governor said Ukrainian authorities found the bodies of at least 20 people in a civilian convoy near the city of Kupiansk. Oleh Syniehubov believed they were killed while they attempted to flee Russian soldiers, according to the Kyiv Independent. • Turkey, which has been at the centre of mediation between the west and Russia, rejected Russia’s annexations in Ukraine, calling the Kremlin’s move on four regions a “grave violation” of international law.
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HEADLINE	10/02 L.A. restricts celebrity mansions’ water flow
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/oct/02/los-angeles-celebrity-homes-water-restriction-drought
GIST	<p>Los Angeles is living through a historic drought, but that hasn’t stopped some of its most famous residents from keeping their mega mansion lawns and ornate gardens well watered. In response, local authorities have turned to a surprisingly simple trick for keeping the wealthiest in check.</p> <p>That solution is a tiny metal disc known as a “flow restrictor”. The restrictor can be installed in minutes over the pipes of chronic wasters, dramatically slowing down a home’s water flow.</p> <p>Restrictors have already been placed on homes owned by multiple celebrities –including comedian Kevin Hart, rapper The Game, and Kourtney Kardashian’s ex, Scott Disick, according to water district records reviewed by the Guardian. Other famous names could be next – addresses linked to Kim Kardashian, Sylvester Stallone, and Madonna have all been included on lists of violators who were eligible for flow restrictors.</p> <p>For water authorities, it’s an experiment in holding the super-rich accountable to the same standards as everyone else.</p> <p>“We have taken a very firm position on being equal. It doesn’t matter who you are, how much money you make, how well known you are: all of you are being treated the same,” said Mike McNutt, a spokesperson for the Las Virgenes water district, which serves areas like Calabasas and Hidden Hills that are popular with celebrities.</p> <p>A small yet mighty solution</p> <p>As California’s decades-long megadrought deepened this year, water authorities across the state have issued mandatory cutbacks, enforceable with fines. But the Las Virgenes water district had a particular challenge, McNutt said: their customers are so rich that monetary penalties are unlikely to change their behavior, even as the district mandated a 50% reduction in outdoor watering.</p> <p>So Cason Gilmer, 36, the district’s senior field customer service representative, headed to the water district’s workshop, and started tinkering around with a mechanical solution.</p>

The result was the small yet mighty flow restrictor, a disc made out of food-safe stainless steel with a tiny hole at the center. It has the power to limit water flow so sharply that it's difficult to shower and wash dishes at the same time, while outdoor lawn watering becomes impossible.

Popping a flow restrictor into the water pipe outside a customer's residence takes only about 10min, and the district adds a seal and a sign warning of a \$2,500 fine if the device is tampered with, McNutt said.

Gilmer says he initially tested the device on his own house and it worked just as he'd hoped. The sinks and toilets "worked fine", the shower operated at about 60% of normal volume, but "you have to be really water conscious" because "you can't use two things at the same time".

For the most part, customers, even celebrities, have been reasonable, Gilmer said, and not thrown fits when presented with the risk of having their water flow slowed to a trickle.

The lawn around Kourtney Kardashian's pool in Calabasas had gone brown by September, suggesting that the reality star's household had made changes after making it onto the long list of customers eligible for a flow restrictor, [CBS News Los Angeles reported](#). In contrast, the lawn outside Kim Kardashian's mansion was still "a perfectly-manicured green", the TV station reported.

Scott Disick, Kourtney's ex, did not avoid a flow restrictor at his Hidden Hills mansion, according to public records. In late July, the water district installed a flow restrictor at his Hidden Hills mansion for two weeks. [Water](#) district records note that someone at Disick's house "refused" to sign the commitment form that allows customers to avoid a flow restrictor by pledging to reduce water use. Representatives for Disick, the Kardashians, Hart and the Game did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

A Hidden Hills mansion [reportedly owned](#) by Madonna, which is currently on the market for nearly \$26m, narrowly avoided a flow restrictor installation in July, after documenting to water district officials that a leak at the property had been repaired. Representatives for Madonna and the real estate agent did not respond to requests for comment.

A handful of celebrities, including environmentalist Erin Brockovich and former NBA star [Dwyane Wade](#), have made public statements about what they're doing to use less water after being featured in local news segments about boldface names violating drought restrictions.

Others have pushed back: a representative for Sylvester Stallone said in a statement that the film star is trying to keep more than 500 mature trees on his property alive, and that he has taken other measures to reduce water use, and is working with the water district to resolve the situation.

'A massive deterrent effect'

A residence becomes eligible for a restrictor when it has exceeded its water limit by 150% at least four times since December 2021. But while more than 1,600 customers in the district have met this criteria, McNutt said, they have actually installed the device very sparingly – just six or seven dozen installations through early September.

The device is only in place for two weeks, and the water district is not allowed to cut off access to potable water for health reasons, McNutt said. So far, they said, the tactic has faced no legal challenges.

Before their water use is cut, customers have multiple opportunities to talk to water district officials and change their ways. Even signing a letter of intent to meet conservation goals is enough to avoid a flow restrictor, though the district will continue to check to see that customers comply, McNutt said.

McNutt and Gilmer believe that the flow restrictor is already having a massive deterrent effect.

Driving around the district earlier in the summer, they used to see lots of green lawns, despite the outdoor watering limits. By August, lawns were looking browner. News crews who want to do a ride along with water district employees as they searched for drought flouters have ended up disappointed, with few if any

	<p>rule-breakers to be seen, McNutt said. Some households have even taken to spray-painting their lawns green as a way to reduce water use, he and Gilmer said.</p> <p>As far as they know, Las Virgenes is the only water district in California that uses flow restrictors, but their unique approach is drawing national interest. They've been fielding inquiries from Texas and Florida, as well as other California water districts. Gilmer said it's similar to devices used to slow water flow in agriculture, but that there's nothing exactly like it, and he's exploring getting a patent.</p> <p>McNutt said he wished more American celebrities would use their own skills to focus on the water crisis: "I am asking any celebrity, any of them, to step up and use their platforms to talk about water conservation, to talk about climate change."</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Cargo carriers cancel sailings, containers
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/cargo-shipowners-cancel-sailings-as-global-trade-flips-from-backlogs-to-empty-containers-11664681947?mod=hp_lista_pos5
GIST	<p>Ocean carriers are canceling dozens of sailings on the world's busiest routes during what is normally their peak season, the latest sign of the economic whiplash hitting companies as inflation weighs on global trade and consumer spending.</p> <p>The October cancellations are a sharp reversal from just a few months ago, when scarce shipping space pushed freight rates higher and carriers' profits to record levels. Last October, companies like Walmart Inc. and Home Depot Inc. were chartering their own ships to get around bottlenecks at ports to meet a surge in demand for imports.</p> <p>Trans-Pacific shipping rates have plummeted roughly 75% from year-ago levels. The transportation industry is grappling with weaker demand as big retailers cancel orders with vendors and step up efforts to cut inventories. FedEx Corp. recently said it would cancel flights and park cargo planes because of a sharp drop in shipping volumes. On Thursday, Nike Inc. said it was sitting on 65% more inventory in North America than a year earlier and would resort to markdowns.</p> <p>The erosion in global economic conditions, from the war in Ukraine to factory shutdowns in China, have dealt heavy blows to trade activity. The International Monetary Fund has cut its forecast for global growth in gross domestic product multiple times this year. Consumer prices are rising at the fastest rates in years in the U.S., countries in Europe and other parts of the world.</p> <p>One response to the melting demand has been to reduce sailing trips. In September, container capacity offered by ship operators in the Pacific was down 13%, dropping the equivalent of 21 ships that can each move 8,000 containers in a single voyage, from a year earlier, according to shipping-data providers Xeneta and Sea-Intelligence.</p> <p>For the two weeks starting Oct. 3, a total of about 40 scheduled sailings to the U.S. West Coast from Asia and 21 sailings to the East Coast from Asia have been scrapped, according to the data companies as well as customer advisories viewed by The Wall Street Journal. Typically at this time of year, an average of two to four sailings a week are blanked, the industry's term for canceled sailings.</p> <p>Carriers also are increasingly canceling trips along key Asia-to-Europe routes, the data providers said.</p> <p>"In the first week of October, one-third of previously announced capacity will be blanked and for the second week, it will be around half," said Peter Sand, chief analyst at Xeneta. "The downturn pace in recent weeks has been very fast and it looks like carriers misread the low volumes of a nonexistent peak season."</p> <p>The period between late summer and early fall typically is the busiest time of year for the largest carriers, as retailers and other importers build inventories ahead of the holiday shopping season.</p>

Daily freight rates now average \$3,900 to move a single container across the Pacific, compared with \$14,500 at the start of the year and more than \$19,000 in 2021, according to the Freightos Baltic Index.

Mediterranean Shipping Co., the world's largest container carrier by capacity, has voided some sailings recently, including a six-ship service from China to Los Angeles and Long Beach.

The rotation, which MSC operated in alliance with A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S, was suspended "due to significantly reduced demand for shipments into the U.S. West Coast during the past weeks," according to a customer notice posted Wednesday on MSC's website. The suspension will remove nearly 12,000 containers a week in capacity from the trans-Pacific trade, and the action would help strengthen the transit times it offers, MSC said in its notice.

MSC declined to comment beyond the notice as did a Maersk spokesman. A [Hapag-Lloyd](#) AG spokesman said the company hasn't canceled sailings as a result of weaker demand. [Cosco Shipping Holding](#) Co. and CMA CGM, two other major container operators, didn't respond to requests for comment.

Some carriers are reluctant to share details on canceled sailings to avoid showing competitors what is happening in their network. Voyages can be scrapped because of port congestion, scheduling issues or falling demand.

Consumer spending on bulky items like furniture and appliances that are often imported into the U.S. [has cooled in recent months](#), according to government data. Such items were in hot demand earlier in the pandemic as Americans spent more time at home and renovated their houses.

A flotilla of new container ships under order will add capacity over the next two years, meaning that freight rates could come under more pressure as more ship space becomes available.

Ocean container capacity is slated to increase 4% this year and is expected to rise by 8.8% in 2023 and a further 9.7% in 2024, according to London-based shipping adviser Braemar PLC. Since early 2020 some 1,056 ships that can move about eight million boxes were ordered, compared with 688 vessels ordered from 2015 to 2019 that can move around five million boxes.

"The global economy has thrown a few curveballs this year, and our outlook on future demand is uncertain and tepid," said Jonathan Roach, a container analyst at Braemar. "Overcapacity will likely become an issue from the middle of 2023 through to 2024 and potentially beyond."

Overcapacity pushes operators to undercut each other, putting pressure on freight rates. Boxship operators fought deep losses for nearly a decade starting in 2008, which prompted consolidation in the industry. The [top six ocean-freight carriers](#) move more than 70% of all containers worldwide.

Freight rates on key shipping routes remain above prepandemic levels, and the largest operators have plenty of cash to weather a near-term economic downturn. The costs carriers face are rising, too. Bunker fuel prices, which have cooled since hitting records this summer, are above their late 2019 levels. Port operators are also charging more for ships to dock, passing along the higher energy prices they are facing to the carriers.

"The cost of electricity, particularly in Europe, is significant because the cranes and other heavy equipment run on electrical power," said Tiemen Meester, chief operating officer for ports and terminals at DP World, a Dubai-based operator of terminals in ports worldwide.

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HEADLINE	10/03 UK scraps plan to cut taxes for rich
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/uk-pm-liz-truss-scraps-tax-cut-rich-market-chaos-pound-crashing-rcna50407

LONDON — [British Prime Minister Liz Truss](#) on Monday ditched her signature plan to cut taxes for the country's top earners after it [triggered market turmoil](#) and a huge domestic outcry.

Truss, who is [less than a month](#) into the job, proposed removing the top tier of income tax — meaning a saving for people who earn more than 150,000 pounds (\$168,000) a year — as part of a set of unfunded economic reforms that caused the pound to fall to historic lows and damaged Britain's economic standing globally.

The dramatic reversal comes just hours after Truss defiantly defended the tax cut and her broader radical economic agenda to ruling Conservative Party activists, saying it was necessary to solve the country's long-term economic woes. Faced with a growing political rebellion after days of economic chaos, the government said early Monday it was abandoning the plan.

"We get it and we have listened," Truss and her embattled finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng said on Twitter.

The pound rose after the announcement to around \$1.12 — about the value it held before the Sept. 23 budget announcements.

The abrupt about-face comes as the Conservatives gather in Birmingham for an annual conference, normally a morale-boosting event for activists to hear about the party's priorities for the year ahead.

Instead, the party finds itself in embarrassing retreat with a resurgent opposition center-left Labour Party about 20% ahead in opinion polls. With the country already facing a grim winter of soaring energy bills and food prices, critics accused Truss of having misplaced priorities and intensifying the pain for many.

Labour's finance spokesperson Rachel Reeves [said](#): "The Tories have destroyed their economic credibility and damaged trust in the British economy."

Even as Truss defended the policy over the weekend, a growing number of senior lawmakers in her party signaled they would vote against it in the House of Commons.

The plan to cut taxes for the wealthy was part of a broader "mini-budget" announced soon after the new administration took office. Aimed at fueling economic growth, it proposed broader tax and regulation cuts in a £45 billion (\$50 billion) package that was unfunded, leaving Britons wondering which already-strained public services might be cut to save money.

The move earned a rare rebuke from the International Monetary Fund, which urged the government to "re-evaluate" a plan that may fuel already-soaring inflation and increase economic inequality.

The plan to borrow more to fund unpopular tax cuts was roundly rejected as unsound by economists, with the value of the pound plummeting and the cost for the U.K. to borrow on international markets soaring.

The British central bank, the Bank of England which is independent of government, intervened with a 65 billion pound (\$73 billion) package to stave off market panic.

Despite the reversal, homeowners and prospective buyers look set for a rough ride as interest rates are still likely to rise, pushing mortgage rates higher for millions. Banks have already removed dozens of mortgage deals and pushed their monthly fees higher.

Kwarteng said the government was sticking to its other tax policies, including a cut next year in the basic rate of income tax.

Last week Truss suffered a memorably bruising round of interviews with local radio stations, in which she falteringly attempted to defend the measures.

	<p>A BBC Nottingham presenter described the top rate income tax cut as a "reverse Robin Hood" policy and asked Truss: "Why don't you just hold your hands up and say, 'This is a mess, we got it wrong and we're going to do something different?'"</p> <p>Days later the government is, though it may be too late to avoid long-term political and economic consequences.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Forest Service to blame in Caldor Fire?
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/caldor-fire-california-us-forest-service-60-minutes-2022-10-02/
GIST	<p>Grizzly Flats had stood in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in California since 1851. Lumber was the economic backbone of the region for decades. But it took only 15 minutes one night last August for nea of the town to be destroyed, engulfed by the Caldor Fire that had roared out of the Eldorado National Forest.</p> <p>The fire would burn for two months, scorching more than 200,000 acres and costing \$271 million to extinguish.</p> <p>It started as a small plume of smoke about four miles south of Grizzly Flats at 7 p.m. on August 14th, 2021. Since the fire was on federal land the U.S. Forest Service was in charge, responsible for calling in firefighters and resources. A 60 Minutes investigation discovered that problems started right away: maps were out of date, firefighters had trouble locating the fire. As she was listening to her police scanner, resident Candance Tyler said her heart sank.</p> <p>"They're sending them down Caldor Road. Well, it's been washed out for three years," Tyler told correspondent Bill Whitaker. "How are you going to get a tanker down there? Have you seen the washout? It's huge. It would take a month of Sundays to fill that hole in or cut a new road."</p> <p>Keeping national forests healthy—including maintaining roads—is a central part of the Forest Service's mandate. But 60 Minutes found many roads in the Eldorado Forest were impassable—blocked by downed trees and deep ruts. When the Caldor Fire broke out, fire engines had to backtrack, a costly two-hour delay.</p> <p>Retired fire captain Grant Ingram was also listening to his scanner. Ingram fought fires for 35 years for BOTH the U.S. Forest Service and for Cal Fire, California's state firefighting agency. Ingram investigated the initial spread of the fire for the local fire district and he told us he believes the U.S. Forest Service management team bears much of the blame.</p> <p>"The leadership failed to give the team on the ground what they needed to do to put that fire out in a timely manner," Ingram told Whitaker.</p> <p>"You flat out say it's a failure of leadership?" Whitaker asked.</p> <p>"Absolutely," Ingram said. "They failed to understand where the fire was going to go. Then they failed to bring in enough equipment and resources to mitigate that fire. And then, they failed to protect the community of Grizzly Flats when they knew it was headed that way."</p> <p>Ingram said one of the most consequential decisions came in the early hours of August 15, when the fire was still small. At 1:43 a.m., just hours into the fire, the Forest Service shut down operations for the night.</p> <p>"Will be pulling everyone off the line for accountability" reads the dispatch log, a minute-by-minute account of the fire that 60 Minutes obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request. The Forest Service said it was unsafe to continue and it wanted to reassess.</p> <p>"When I worked for other agencies, we typically fought fires at night. That was the best time to do it," Ingram told Whitaker.</p>

"But yet this Forest Service incident commander was ordering people to stop," Whitaker said. "Turn back, go home."

"Right. I couldn't believe it at first," Ingram said. "Firefighting is dangerous but you don't call 9-1-1 when you're a firefighter. You are there as 9-1-1."

The order to pull out didn't sit well with state and local firefighters who'd raced in to help the Forest Service. A number of them told 60 Minutes that they believed that night was their best chance to contain the fire. They also said they were trained to fight wildfires 24/7 until the fire is out. No one would go on camera for fear of losing their jobs, so 60 Minutes agreed to conceal this firefighter's identity.

"So when you heard the incident commander say he was pulling out, and other equipment, fire engines and bulldozers left with him, what did you think?" Whitaker asked the firefighter.

"What in the world's going on here? I mean, like what the hell? We have a fire. You have to suppress the fire. It—it's just that simple," the firefighter said. "I think everybody on that hill that night figured that if we didn't get ahead of this thing that night, we were going to be in trouble."

The Forest Service knew it too. Their own fire model for August 15, also obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, showed Grizzly Flats in the middle of the area almost certain to burn—an 80-100% chance—if the fire wasn't put out. Yet that same day, the Forest Service dismissed some half-dozen state Cal Fire engines and crews, letting most of them go before their replacements arrived. Ingram told 60 Minutes that breaks every rule of firefighting.

"It made no sense to me. And it—it should never have happened," Ingram said.

On the second day, August 15, the fire engulfed 200 acres. On August 16, 700 acres. That night, the winds in the canyon whipped the flames into a frenzy and Caldor exploded, consuming 11,000 acres.

Flames jumped from treetop to treetop, picking up speed. The Eldorado National Forest was so dense with dead trees and parched underbrush, it was like a pyre waiting for a match.

"Now everything's on fire. It's all raining down on this community," Ingram recounted. He told Whitaker it was sitting in front of a blow torch.

The U.S. Forest Service says its resources were stretched thin. The Dixie Fire, which would become the second-largest in California history, was burning ferociously nearby. But Ingram told 60 Minutes there were regional crews available. And he pointed to the dispatch log that showed 12 extra fire engines being called up as the flames were tearing into Grizzly Flats. But it was too late.

"All of a sudden all these fire engines start showing up," Ingram said, "and it's like, well, where were they two days ago? Why weren't they in the neighborhood of Grizzly Flats prior to this fire even getting there?"

"The Forest Service won't answer our questions," Ingram continued.

Several miles south of Grizzly Flats at the Leoni Meadows campsite, retired Sacramento Deputy Fire Chief Lloyd Ogan told Whitaker the flames were 30 feet above the treetops that night, hissing and crackling. Ogan said he knew then the Caldor Fire was out of control.

"The thing I struggle with is why would any resources get released on a fire that is in an obviously high-risk location in a high-risk environment? I have not heard what I would term as an acceptable answer to that question yet. I haven't heard any answer to that question yet," Ogan said.

In all the wreckage of Caldor, Leoni Meadows stands out—an island of green in a charred, desolate wasteland. The fire skirted the camp thanks to a massive fuel break—or buffer zone—the camp had built.

Ogan pointed out where they'd thinned trees and cleared the combustible underbrush. When Caldor hit, there was little material left to feed it. The fire slowed and changed direction.

Ogan showed 60 Minutes the Forest Service land next to the camp that had not been cleared. There, everything burned.

"There was no management on the Forest Service side. And that's the result," Ogan said.

"It's kind of mind-blowing to see all that devastation there and it gets to the property line of the camp, where the land was managed, and this all survived. It's all green," Whitaker told Ogan. "Could this have been replicated around Grizzly Flats?"

"Yes. Absolutely," Ogan said. "That's what the Trestle Project was all about, was to do exactly this. And had that been done, there's a high probability Grizzly Flats wouldn't have burned."

The Trestle Project was launched by the Forest Service nine years ago, when its own research warned Grizzly Flats could be incinerated if wildfire ignited the overgrown Eldorado Forest. The agency promised to clean up thousands of acres, starting with 970 acres on the town's southeast flank, where fire would likely hit first. Almost a decade later, only a fraction of the work was done. The Caldor Fire wiped out Grizzly Flats exactly as the Forest Service had predicted.

Residents aren't the only ones who have tried to get answers from the Forest Service. 60 Minutes asked the federal agency repeatedly for documents, a comment, and to have the taxpayer-funded service explain what happened in Grizzly Flats.

Last week, the Forest Service emailed us that it plans to dramatically increase the scale of forest health projects like the Trestle Project and has launched a 10-year plan, starting with communities at immediate threat.

The 10-year plan is no solace for the residents of Grizzly Flats who told 60 Minutes that any trust they had in the Forest Service has been shattered.

"A 40-acre fire," resident Candance Tyler said, "you can't put that out in a canyon? And don't get me wrong, I lived here my whole life. I know that's a steep treacherous canyon, but you're still telling me that you don't have the ability and the equipment to put it out? They didn't do nothing. In our opinion, they did nothing to put this fire out."

Last year, Caldor was one of three devastating fires in the region that started on federal land and burned more than a million acres.

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HEADLINE	10/03 Turkey inflation hits 24yr-high: 83.45%
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/turkeys-annual-inflation-hits-24-year-high-8345-90906684
GIST	<p>ANKARA, Turkey -- Turkey's annual inflation reached a new 24-year high of 83.45% in September, according to official data on Monday, pushing the cost of essential goods higher and further hitting households already facing high energy, food and housing costs.</p> <p>The Turkish Statistical Institute said consumer prices rose by 3.08% from the previous month.</p> <p>Experts say inflation is much higher than official statistics, and the independent Inflation Research Group on Monday put the annual rate at an eye-watering 186.27%.</p> <p>Last month, Turkey's central bank delivered another interest rate cut, lowering the benchmark rate to 12% despite rising prices, a plunging lira and an unbalanced current account. The lira has lost over 50% of its value against the U.S. dollar since the central bank began cutting rates last year.</p>

	<p>Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the lira's decline have stoked inflation. Economists say rising inflation in Turkey is fueled by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's unorthodox belief that high borrowing costs lead to higher prices — the opposite to established economic theory.</p> <p>The government says it hopes to lower interest rates to boost production and exports in a bid to reach a current account surplus. Erdogan has said he expects inflation to fall in the new year.</p> <p>The sharpest increases in annual prices were in the transportation sector, at 117.66%, followed by food and non-alcoholic drinks prices at 93%, according to the statistical institute's data.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Report: China overseas police stations
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/2/report-china-operates-overseas-police-stations-tra/
GIST	<p>The Chinese government has established “overseas police service stations” to keep track of its citizens abroad, including one in New York City and three in Toronto, according to a human rights watchdog group.</p> <p>Safeguard Defenders said in its report released last month that the “110 overseas stations” are used to help the Chinese Communist Party by “cracking down on all kinds of illegal and criminal activities involving overseas Chinese.”</p> <p>The main criminal activities that are monitored by the CCP surrogates are fraud and telecommunications fraud, according to the report.</p> <p>It goes on to say that from April 2021 to July 2022, Chinese authorities claimed that 230,000 Chinese nationals have been successfully “persuaded to return” to China to face criminal proceedings for their actions.</p> <p>Typically the methods used to ensure a citizen returns involve intimidating and imprisoning a criminal target's family, or having CCP proxies threaten the target online or in person and get them to “voluntarily” return.</p> <p>While the stations were partly established in various countries in order to handle administrative duties, such as renewing drivers licenses, the report said that China's United Front organizations have used the stations to police actions of the Chinese diaspora.</p> <p>For example, the report says that the CCP has Cambodia listed as one of the nine forbidden countries for Chinese nationals to live in due to its high incidences of fraud.</p> <p>A Chinese woman running a restaurant in Cambodia was contacted by authorities to return to China in March, according to the report. The woman said she was not committing any fraud and was just doing business in the country.</p> <p>Chinese officials then warned her in May that she would be put on a telecom suspect list and that they would cut water and power to her mother's home if she didn't return. Her mother's home was later spray-painted with the term “House of Telecom Fraud.”</p> <p>The report also cites Chinese media reports where other fraud suspects had relatives' homes spray-painted with shameful messages and their power supply cut off.</p> <p>The report says the tactics “deprives [Chinese nationals] of the right to be considered innocent until proven otherwise and the right to a fair trial, and also institutes a far-reaching ‘guilt by association’ paradigm.”</p>

	<p>China's Anti-Telecom and Online Fraud Law will go into effect in December, and gives the CCP greater authority to pursue fraud cases committed by Chinese citizens overseas.</p> <p>There are a total of 54 stations across 30 countries and five continents, according to the report, with the most being in Europe.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Report: China spying, covert ops threats
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/2/chinese-espionage-cyber-programs-pose-major-counte/
GIST	<p>China's human spying, cyber espionage and more recently covert disinformation operations are a "600-pound gorilla in the room" of foreign counterintelligence threats, according to a Senate report on the growing problem of adversary spying.</p> <p>The heavily-redacted report by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence warns that the U.S. government's central counterintelligence agency and other components are ill-equipped and poorly structured to counter growing foreign spy threats.</p> <p>Foreign intelligence agents and hackers from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea and others are engaged in obtaining secrets and technology from both U.S. government agencies and the private sector with little resistance from counterintelligence agencies, the report states, but one threat stands above all others.</p> <p>"China, however, is the '600-pound gorilla in the room,'" the report states.</p> <p>The report was made public late last month and is largely focused on the National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC), a relatively new agency set up to be the key policymaking center for counterintelligence units. The center is part of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.</p> <p>"NCSC, as the U.S. [government] lead for [counterintelligence], lacks a clear mission as well as sufficient and well-defined authorities and resources to effectively confront this landscape," the report said.</p> <p>"Moreover, NCSC's placement within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence may hinder its ability to scale and respond to threats in an agile manner. Despite these challenges, there is no consensus among [counterintelligence] officials on a way forward for NCSC."</p> <p>A spokesman for NCSC said the center appreciates the panel's report on ways to improve the center's operations and will continue to work with the committee on the matter.</p> <p>The report is part of an ongoing committee investigation into U.S. counterintelligence capabilities. The last legislation on the topic was enacted in 2002 and is deficient in addressing cyber and technology collection by foreign intelligence services, senators and experts said during a hearing on the report.</p> <p>One suggestion for improving counterspy efforts would be to make NCSC a separate agency similar to Britain's domestic counterintelligence agency, MI-5. Currently, the FBI is charged with conducting counterintelligence operations in the United States and the CIA takes the lead on threats from abroad.</p> <p>The gap in responsibilities between the agencies has been exploited for decades by foreign spy services that have recruited spies and stolen extremely-damaging secrets from nearly every national security agency and the military. The 152-page report identifies shortfalls in U.S. counterintelligence but does not offer clear solutions.</p> <p>"I'd love to say that report came up with a series of specific recommendations. It did not," said Committee Chairman Mark Warner, Virginia Democrat.</p> <p>Mr. Warner said he has doubts about creating a separate counterspy agency but added that the committee is thoroughly investigating the possibility.</p>

China threat

The report outlines several ways China in particular is gathering secrets and information in the United States. The operations range from traditional approaches such as planting spies in intelligence and defense agencies to newer methods of cyberespionage from computer networks. China's spies also are targeting agencies not involved in national security, private-sector businesses and academia.

Chinese intelligence is also engaged in covert influence operations that support its other spy operations.

Targeting of university researchers for technology and other know-how also is a key tool.

A list of targets of Chinese intelligence operations was mostly blacked out in the report — except Beijing's efforts to infiltrate U.S. critical infrastructure, such as the electrical grid and the financial sector.

Beijing's spies, hackers and influence agents "launched a full-scale campaign to develop or acquire technologies [China] deems critical to its national interests," the report added.

China is approaching parity with the United States in gross domestic product and in certain elements of its military power.

The United States, over the past 40 years, also became "interdependent" with China, unlike past adversaries such as the Soviet Union.

"China seeks to first displace the United States as the regional power in East Asia, and then to eventually displace the United States as the global hegemon," the report said.

The confrontation with China is unlike the Cold War standoff with the Soviet Union, which was both military and ideological. The current rivalry with China is being waged across the economic, technological, military, diplomatic and ideological spectrums.

Acquiring technology is key to Chinese strategy and plans and is regarded as the main enabler of both economic growth and national power.

Targets of Chinese intelligence gathering include artificial intelligence, quantum computing, integrated circuits, genetics and biotechnology, high end new materials, new energy and intelligent vehicles, smart manufacturing, aerospace engines and gas turbines, deep space, deep earth, deep sea, and polar exploration, among others, the report said.

"It is important to emphasize that China is an authoritarian nation that makes little distinction between its public and private sectors," the report said.

The Chinese system does not distinguish between civilian and military sectors and calls for "fusing" technology and resources for both.

China's full-throated spying approach uses all available means of collection from human spying, technical collection, and cyber espionage, to penetrate the government, private sector, and academia, the report said.

Currently, the FBI is investigating over 2,000 cases of Chinese technology and information theft.

The Chinese intelligence agencies also are using "gray zone" warfare – below the level of armed conflict – against the United States, the report said.

Non-intelligence assets

One unique feature of Chinese operations is the use of non-intelligence assets, including businesspeople, students and researchers at U.S. laboratories.

The FBI reported that Beijing’s “massive, sophisticated computer hacking programs” are the largest in the world. Chinese cyber forces operate from every major city in China, with robust funding and sophisticated hacking tools, the report said.

The NCSC views countering Chinese influence operations as part of its counterspy mission. The report said China’s network of Confucius Institutes – Beijing-funded language and culture centers – are used as tools by government intelligence.

China has also tried to exploit Americans’ doubts about U.S. leaders, undermine democracy, and seek to promote a positive image of China, the report said. China has spread COVID-19 disinformation by claiming the United States created the virus and has stepped up activities that seek to mold public discourse and mute criticism of China’s repressive policies toward minority Uyghurs.

Sen. Marco Rubio, Florida Republican and vice chairman of the committee, said the Chinese conduct long-term intelligence recruitment of younger Americans in their twenties who can be used in the future to promote policies and narratives favorable to China, such as regarding Taiwan or Tibet.

“Twenty years from now, these individuals will be running companies or key agencies in government and maybe even elected,” Mr. Rubio said. “This is a multifaceted, new-era type challenge, which our agencies simply weren’t created to function.”

Michelle Van Cleave, former national counterintelligence executive, told the committee the current structure of counterintelligence agencies is not designed to effectively halt foreign spies, noting that the “best defense is a good offense.”

“But unfortunately, our counterintelligence enterprise has never been configured to be able to preempt,” she said. “Preemption requires strategic national planning and coordinated operations against foreign intelligence threats. By contrast, our [counterintelligence] agencies have very distinct and separate missions, and they operate within their own lanes.”

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HEADLINE	10/02 Solar town survived Ian: no power loss
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/02/us/solar-babcock-ranch-florida-hurricane-ian-climate/index.html
GIST	<p>Anthony Grande moved away from Fort Myers three years ago in large part because of the hurricane risk. He has lived in southwest Florida for nearly 19 years, had experienced Hurricanes Charley in 2004 and Irma in 2017 and saw what stronger storms could do to the coast.</p> <p>Grande told CNN he wanted to find a new home where developers prioritized climate resiliency in a state that is increasingly vulnerable to record-breaking storm surge, catastrophic wind and historic rainfall.</p> <p>What he found was Babcock Ranch — only 12 miles northeast of Fort Myers, yet seemingly light years away.</p> <p>Babcock Ranch calls itself “America’s first solar-powered town.” Its nearby solar array — made up of 700,000 individual panels — generates more electricity than the 2,000-home neighborhood uses, in a state where most electricity is generated by burning natural gas, a planet-warming fossil fuel.</p> <p>The streets in this meticulously planned neighborhood were designed to flood so houses don’t. Native landscaping along roads helps control storm water. Power and internet lines are buried to avoid wind damage. This is all in addition to being built to Florida’s robust building codes.</p> <p>Some residents, like Grande, installed more solar panels on their roofs and added battery systems as an extra layer of protection from power outages. Many drive electric vehicles, taking full advantage of solar energy in the Sunshine State.</p>

Climate resiliency was built into the fabric of the town with stronger storms in mind.

So when Hurricane Ian came barreling toward southwest Florida this week, it was a true test for the community. The storm [obliterated the nearby Fort Myers and Naples areas](#) with record-breaking surge and winds over 100 mph. It knocked out power to more than 2.6 million customers in the state, including 90% of Charlotte County.

But the lights stayed on in Babcock Ranch.

“It certainly exceeded our expectations of a major hurricane,” Grande, 58, told CNN.

The storm uprooted trees and tore shingles from roofs, but other than that Grande said there is no major damage. Its residents say Babcock Ranch is proof that an eco-conscious and solar-powered town can withstand the wrath of a near-Category 5 storm.

“We have proof of the case now because [the hurricane] came right over us,” Nancy Chorpenning, a 68-year-old Babcock Ranch resident, told CNN. “We have water, electricity, internet — and we may be the only people in Southwest Florida who are that fortunate.”

Grande said Hurricane Ian came through southwest Florida “like a freight train.” But he wasn’t afraid that he would lose everything in a storm, like he was when he lived in Fort Myers.

“We’re very, very blessed and fortunate to not be experiencing what they’re experiencing now in Sanibel Island and Fort Myers Beach,” Grande said. “In the times that we’re living in right now with climate change, the beach is not the place to live or have a business.”

Solar success

Syd Kitson, a former professional football player for the Green Bay Packers and Dallas Cowboys, is the mastermind behind Babcock Ranch. Kitson envisioned it to be an eco-conscious and innovative neighborhood that is safe and resilient from storms like Ian.

The ranch [broke ground in 2015](#) with the construction of the solar array — which was built and is run by [Florida Power and Light](#) — and its first residents moved into the town in 2018. Since then, the array has doubled in size and thousands of people have made Babcock their home.

“It’s a great case study to show that it can be done right, if you build in the right place and do it the right way,” said Lisa Hall, a spokesperson for Kitson, who also lives in Babcock Ranch.

“Throughout all this, there’s just so many people saying, ‘it worked, that this was the vision, this is the reason we moved here,’” Hall told CNN.

Perhaps the highest endorsement for the city is that it is now a refuge for some of Ian’s hardest-hit victims. The state opened Babcock Neighborhood School as an official shelter, even though it didn’t have the mandated generator. The solar array kept the lights on.

Some of Chorpenning’s friends who live on Sanibel Island — which is now [cut off from the mainland](#) after Ian’s devastating storm surge severed the causeway — came to shelter at a friend’s house at Babcock Ranch. It will be a while before they can go back, she said.

“They’re going to be renting a place over here for a while, while they figure out what’s going to happen out there,” she said. “I joked that we may be the only people in southwest Florida whose property value just increased.”

Even Kitson chose to ride out the storm in Babcock to see how the community would fare in the hurricane. Kitson declined CNN’s request for an interview; Hall said he is focused on helping neighboring communities rebuild.

	<p>“He was there during the storm; he said, ‘where else would I be?’” Hall said. “We built it to be resilient and as much as you plan and think you’ve done the right thing, you don’t know until you put it to the test.”</p> <p>As utilities scramble to restore power across the state, Babcock residents say September storms showed that America’s energy infrastructure is not well-equipped to handle worsening extreme weather events. Hurricane Fiona ravaged Puerto Rico’s power grid when it made landfall there on September 18. Now, Ian has left millions of people in the dark in Florida.</p> <p>Babcock residents say their neighborhood is a model for urban development in a climate change-ravaged future.</p> <p>“It’s not what it was 20 or 25 years ago; the storms are getting bigger and bigger, and it’s no surprise, because the warnings have all been there,” Grande said. “I think Babcock Ranch’s future has gotten even brighter.”</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Iran claims due \$7B US father-son release
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/02/iran-says-it-is-due-7bn-for-release-of-us-iranian-father-and-son
GIST	<p>Iran is awaiting the release of about \$7bn (£6.3bn) in funds frozen abroad, state media said on Sunday, after it allowed an Iranian-American to leave the country and released his son from detention.</p> <p>Baquer Namazi, 85, was permitted to leave Iran for medical treatment abroad, and his son Siamak, 50, was released from detention in Tehran, the UN said on Saturday.</p> <p>“With the finalisation of negotiations between Iran and the United States to release the prisoners of both countries, \$7bn of Iran’s blocked resources will be released,” said the state news agency, IRNA.</p> <p>Billions of dollars in Iranian funds have been frozen in a number of countries – notably China, South Korea and Japan – since the US reimposed biting sanctions on the Islamic republic in 2018 after unilaterally withdrawing from Tehran’s nuclear deal with world powers.</p> <p>Tehran has accused Seoul of holding \$7bn of its funds “hostage”, repeatedly calling on South Korean authorities to release it.</p> <p>IRNA on Sunday said that “Washington is pursuing at the same time the release of its citizens detained in Tehran and the release of Iranian funds in South Korea”.</p> <p>The development comes amid on-off talks that have been under way since April 2021 to revive the 2015 deal that gave Iran much-needed relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.</p> <p>Iran has repeatedly called for the lifting of sanctions, as well as guarantees that the US will not again pull out of a revived deal.</p> <p>Baquer Namazi is a former Unicef official who was detained in February 2016 when he went to Iran to press for the release of his son, Siamak, who had been arrested in October the previous year.</p> <p>Both were convicted of espionage in October 2016 and sentenced to 10 years in prison.</p> <p>The father was released on medical leave in 2018 and had been serving his sentence under house arrest.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Jaywalk ticket-free in California
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SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/02/us/california-jaywalking-law-trnd/index.html
GIST	<p>Californians will soon be able to cross the street outside of a formal intersection without being ticketed – as long as it’s safe to do so.</p> <p>Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the Freedom to Walk Act into law on Friday, according to a news release from Assemblymember Phil Ting, who wrote the bill.</p> <p>The law stipulates that pedestrians can only be ticketed for jaywalking – or crossing outside of an intersection – if there is “immediate danger of a collision,” says the release.</p> <p>The new law will take effect on January 1.</p> <p>In the release, Ting seemed to reference racist policing and the unfair targeting of Black pedestrians for jaywalking arrests.</p> <p>“It should not be a criminal offense to safely cross the street. When expensive tickets and unnecessary confrontations with police impact only certain communities, it’s time to reconsider how we use our law enforcement resources and whether our jaywalking laws really do protect pedestrians,” said Ting.</p> <p>“Plus, we should be encouraging people to get out of their cars and walk for health and environmental reasons.”</p> <p>According to the release, jaywalking is “arbitrarily enforced” in California, and disproportionately affects “people of color and lower-income individuals who cannot afford tickets that can often total hundreds of dollars.”</p> <p>In 2020, protests erupted when an Orange County sheriff’s deputy shot and killed Kurt Reinhold, a homeless Black man, after stopping him for allegedly jaywalking. Prosecutors eventually declined to bring charges against the deputy who shot Reinhold.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Eco-warriors, unions march on London
SOURCE	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11269747/Thousands-Just-Stop-Oil-eco-warriors-including-Piers-Corbyn-start-marching-London.html
GIST	<p>Thousands of eco-warriors are marching through central London today as they join forces with militant trade union supporters and cost-of-living demonstrators in a mega-demo to bring the capital to a standstill.</p> <p>Eco-group Just Stop Oil vowed to 'occupy Westminster' as part of the nationwide 'Enough is enough' campaign, which is targeting more than 50 cities, towns and villages across the country, including Birmingham, Glasgow and Belfast.</p> <p>The group said on Twitter that 'thousands of ordinary people' were set to march on central London to demand 'an emergency response to the climate and cost-of-living crisis.'</p> <p>Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was among the crowds after giving a speech to support today's crippling railway strikes outside King's Cross station, while his Peace and Justice Project group joined the demonstrations.</p> <p>His conspiracy theorist brother Piers - who has mounted counter protests at similar events in the past, claiming global warming is a 'myth' - was also spotted in London in his now infamous yellow t-shirt. Three metal bins were set on fire outside Kings Cross station by the group Don't Pay, which handed out fake 'fuel bills' for people to throw into the flames.</p> <p>Other groups including Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Insulate Britain are also said to be taking part.</p>

Meanwhile, a huge demonstration in support of Mahsa Amini, who was recently tortured and killed by authorities in Iran for not wearing her hijab correctly, erupted in Trafalgar Square.

Just Stop Oil previously said it is hoping for 1,500 of its volunteers to get arrested twice during the protests, which will see demonstrators blocking bridges over the Thames in London.

There was already a police presence on Lambeth bridge early on Saturday afternoon, where hundreds of protestors were holding a series of sit down demos.

While some of the Euston marchers carried a banner declaring capitalism 'the enemy of Mother Earth', others were protesting against the Government's mini-budget.

One protester, who gave his name as George, held a sign that criticised the Conservatives' lack of 'fiscal budget responsibility' along with their record on fossil fuels.

'I think no government can run if it's spending more, like vastly more, than it's bringing in,' he said. 'That can't carry on forever.'

He added, self-consciously: 'I sound like David Cameron when I say that.'

Groups from across London occupied Parliament Square in Westminster after the march was been pushed back an hour because of the delay in the marchers setting off.

The demo had been scheduled to begin at around 11am when volunteers assembled at 25 starting points across London including Waterloo, Paddington and Euston stations.

The groups plan to converge at Westminster to 'demand an end to the economic and moral madness of continued oil and gas expansion'.

Extinction Rebellion tweeted from Parliament Square, saying: 'Parliament Square... Occupied. Politics as usual is broken. Government can't tackle the #ClimateCrises or the #CostOfToryCrisis.'

'Liz Truss is out of her depth with no mandate and no legitimacy. She serves the super rich, not the people.'

Just Stop Oil's founder Roger Hallam was revealed by The Mail on Sunday to have said that Metropolitan Police would be 'too scared' to arrest activists at first but that it would be forced to do so as the protests escalate.

He said the group was aiming to identify and recruit 1,500 people prepared to get arrested twice in London during the campaign.

Another activist, a former businessman in his late 40s, told a meeting in Norwich earlier this month: 'We've talked to people in the judicial system and they reckon the system couldn't really cope with about 3,000 arrests.'

The group began its project on April 1 and since then has seen 1,296 arrests as the protestors demanded the government end new oil and gas projects in the UK.

Eco-warriors have occupied several bridges across the capital on Saturday, including Lambeth Bridge and Westminster Bridge.

'The politicians have turned a deaf ear to petitions and protests and marches - they just don't seem to care,' David Pearson, who helped organise the march.

Speaking in front of the Palace of Westminster, he added: 'We're trying to shame a government that has no shame, so there's a fundamental flaw in our theory of change.'

By around 3.30pm, most marchers appeared to be responding to the police's requests and had left the scene without being arrested.

Meanwhile in Leeds protesters gathered outside British Gas offices in a protest against fossil fuels and the cost of living crisis.

Julie Hesmondhalgh, who played Coronation Street's Hayley Cropper, will be speaking at the Manchester rally alongside Lamin Touray, who played footballer Ashley Hargrove on the street.

Newcastle's event has been backed by Si King, one half of the Hairy Bikers, as well as poet Tom Pickard.

Award-winning comedian Rob Delaney will join the Rail Maritime and Transport union's Mick Lynch and Dave Ward of the Communication Workers Union, at the London event.

Rob Delaney said: 'Does a chief executive need an extra zero at the end of their salary, or should nurses, posties and teachers be able to heat their homes this winter? Enough is enough.'

The protests are coinciding with picket lines being mounted by railway workers outside major stations across the country as part of the latest strike in the long running dispute over pay, jobs and conditions.

Former Coronation Street actor Lamin Touray said: 'I saw the Enough is Enough campaign and just thought, that's exactly what everyone is feeling.'

'I don't think anyone remembers when times have been this hard. (The) Government needs to sit up and listen to the people - it can't go on like this.'

Hairy Biker, chef and presenter, Si King said: 'Millions of hardworking people and families across our country are being forced into poverty and utter desperation due to the cost-of-living crisis.'

'We have a system that favours corporate power and wealth over normal people. Those in power have neither the will nor the empathy to change it.'

A Just Stop Oil spokesman said: 'We are currently witnessing the breakdown of all we hold dear. Our government has not 'got this' – they are increasing the grip of fossil fuels at our throat.'

'If the government won't stop approving new oil and gas projects then we will make them stop. Come to Westminster from October 1 to peacefully join thousands of other ordinary people in civil resistance because our lives depend on it.'

Jeremy Corbyn, the founder of the Peace and Justice Project, said: 'Record breaking weather is happening everywhere and everything is too expensive. That's the crisis. You can't separate out the cost of living and climate crises. The whole system, which creates billionaires and starves hundreds of millions, is the crisis. It can't be resolved, it must be overcome and transformed.'

Stuart Bretherton, 24, Energy For All Campaign Coordinator, Fuel Poverty Action said: 'The climate crisis and the cost of living crisis are a direct result of how our economy is run for the benefit of an energy industry that will chew us up and spit us out.'

'But at the same time we have common solutions to both these crises. Climate justice doesn't mean further hardship, it means warm homes, lower bills, cleaner air and a better economy for every one of us.'

Lee Jasper of Black Sox, said: 'The west relentlessly pumps out its carbon gas to feed its insatiable consumer economies, while the poorest people on the planet, in the global south endure climate catastrophe, famine'

	<p>and drought, whose people are being sacrificed to maintain unsustainable western lifestyles. We need climate change and climate justice.'</p> <p>Zita Holbourne, chair of Black Activists Rising Against Cuts, (BARAC UK) said: 'The issues of climate displacement, environmental injustice, migration, colonialism, reparations and systemic racism are all interconnected and part of the same struggle for racial justice and human rights globally. There can be nothing about us without us and until all of us are free, none of us are free.'</p> <p>Kate Hudson, from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament said: 'Fossil fuels have contributed to the two greatest threats facing humanity – climate catastrophe and nuclear war.'</p> <p>Liam Norton, from Insulate Britain, said: 'The government's plan to open new oil, gas and coal projects is the biggest act of government criminality in our history. They are participating in the destruction of this country and the murder of countless people around the world. What else can you call it? In order to stop new oil and gas we need to Insulate Britain. Now.'</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Some Florida communities 'unrecognizable'
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/02/us/hurricane-ian-south-carolina-florida-repairs-sunday/index.html
GIST	<p>CNN —Days after Hurricane Ian slammed into Florida, shell-shocked residents are still assessing the damage left behind by record-high storm surge, damaging winds and catastrophic flooding that left some areas of the Sunshine State unrecognizable.</p> <p>At least 66 people were killed by Ian in Florida as it swallowed homes in its furious rushing waters, obliterated roadways and ripped down powerlines. Four people were also killed in storm-related incidents in North Carolina, officials say.</p> <p>Nearly 900,000 customers in Florida still did not have power as of early Sunday morning, according to PowerOutage.us. More than 30,000 remained without power in North Carolina.</p> <p>The hurricane – expected to be ranked the most expensive storm in Florida’s history – made landfall Wednesday as a powerful Category 4 and had weakened to a post-tropical cyclone by Saturday, dropping rain over parts of West Virginia and western Maryland.</p> <p>While sunshine has returned to Florida, many there are contending with Ian’s sobering aftermath: a power grid that may take weeks to fix, destroyed homes, damaged landmarks, and lost loved ones.</p> <p>The devastation stretched from Florida’s coastal towns to inland cities like Orlando, but was felt most intensely in southwestern coastal communities, like Fort Myers and Naples.</p> <p>Crews had rescued and evacuated more than 1,070 people from flooded areas in southwest and central Florida and transported 78 people from a flooded elderly care facility as of Saturday morning, Gov. Ron DeSantis’ office said in a news release.</p> <p>The US Coast Guard also carried out rescues, navigating through challenging post-storm conditions, Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson told CNN.</p> <p>“We’re flying and we’re operating in areas that are unrecognizable,” he said. “There’s no street signs. They don’t look like they used to look like. Buildings that were once benchmarks in the community are no longer there.”</p> <p>Many of the Ian-related deaths have been reported in southwestern Florida’s Lee County, which includes Fort Myers and Sanibel Island, where at least 35 people died.</p>

Local officials are facing criticism about whether mandatory evacuations in Lee County should have been issued sooner. Officials there did not order evacuations until less than 24 hours before the storm made landfall, and a day after several neighboring counties issued their orders.

DeSantis on Saturday [defended the timing of Lee County's orders](#), saying they were given as soon as the storm's projected path shifted south, putting the area in Ian's crosshairs.

The storm's toll in Florida also includes 12 deaths in Charlotte County, eight in Collier County, five in Volusia County, three in Sarasota County and one each in Polk, Lake and Manatee counties, according to officials.

President Joe Biden continued to pledge federal support for Florida, saying Hurricane Ian is "likely to rank among the worst ... in the nation's history."

The President and first lady Jill Biden are set to travel to Puerto Rico Monday to survey damage from [Hurricane Fiona](#), then head to Florida Wednesday, according to a statement from the White House.

Rescue efforts continue days after Ian's landfall

After Hurricane Ian finished its devastating crawl over Florida, residents emerged, surveying damaged homes, picking up debris and maneuvering waterlogged roads.

The Florida National Guard was working on search and rescue missions with local authorities throughout southwest and central Florida Saturday, pulling distressed residents from flooded areas and lifting some to safety via helicopter, according to the governor.

People on Sanibel and Captiva islands found themselves cut off from the mainland after parts of a causeway were destroyed by the storm, leaving boats and helicopters as their only exit options.

Groups of civilian volunteers were working to help residents leave Sanibel, where [aerial imagery](#) has shown many cottages that lined the island's shores were wiped away.

Sanibel Island resident Andy Boyle was on the island when the hurricane hit. He said he lost his home and two cars, but feels lucky to be alive.

"A lot of people have very expensive, well-built homes on Sanibel and they felt with their multi-million dollar homes built like fortresses, they would be fine," Boyle said.

Boyle was riding out the storm at home when the dining room roof collapsed. "That's when we started to get concerned," he said.

He described waving down National Guard aircraft the next day outside his house, and seeing the scenes of devastation around the island.

"When you go to the east end of the island, there's just a lot of destruction. The houses surrounding the lighthouse are all gone. When you go to the west end of the island, the old restaurants up there, they're all gone. The street going to Captiva is now a beach," Boyle said.

The US Coast Guard plans to evacuate people from Lee County's Pine Island during daylight hours Sunday, according to the [Lee County Sheriff's Office](#).

Residents were also evacuated from the Hidden River area of Sarasota County after a compromised levee threatened to flood homes, the sheriff's office said Saturday.

Ian's damage has been extensive and power may be out for weeks

Further complicating recovery is the lack of electricity and spotty communication in impacted areas.

It could take up to a week from Sunday before power is restored in storm-damaged counties, said Eric Silagy, president and CEO of Florida Power & Light Company. And some customers may not be back on the grid for “weeks or months” because some buildings with structural damage will need safety inspections.

Around 65% of all power outages in Florida from the storm had been resorted as of early Sunday, according to PowerOutage.us.

Florida is also working with Elon Musk and Starlink satellite to help restore communication in the state, according to DeSantis. “They’re positioning those Starlink satellites to provide good coverage in Southwest Florida and other affected areas,” DeSantis said.

Emergency responders in Lee County will be among those receiving Starlink devices.

Fort Myers councilmember Liston Bochette told CNN the city was hit hard, with “major issues” with in the city’s water, power and sewage systems.

In Charlotte County, residents are “facing a tragedy” without homes, electricity or water supplies, said Claudette Smith, public information officer for the sheriff’s office.

“We need everything, to put it plain and simple. We need everything. We need all hands on deck,” Smith told CNN Friday. “The people who have come to our assistance have been tremendously helpful, but we do need everything.”

Hurricane Ian may have caused as much as \$47 billion in insured losses in Florida, according to an estimate from property analytics firm CoreLogic – which could make it the most expensive storm in the state’s history.

Ian batters the Carolinas, kills 4 in storm-related incidents

After walloping Florida, Ian made its second landfall in the US near Georgetown, South Carolina, Friday afternoon as a Category 1 hurricane, and began lashing the coasts of Georgia and the Carolinas with ferocious wind and rainfall.

In North Carolina, the four storm-related deaths include a man who drowned when his truck went into a flooded swamp; two people who died in separate crashes; and a man who died of carbon monoxide poisoning after running a generator in a closed garage, according to Gov. Roy Cooper’s office.

No deaths have been reported in South Carolina, Gov. Henry McMaster said Saturday.

The storm has flooded homes and submerged vehicles along South Carolina’s shoreline. Two piers – one in Pawleys Island and another in North Myrtle Beach – partially collapsed as high winds pushed water even higher.

Edgar Stephens, who manages the Cherry Grove Pier in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, stood yards away as a 100-foot section from the pier’s middle crashed into the ocean.

Stephens said the Cherry Grove Pier is a staple for community members and tourists alike.

“We’re a destination, not just a fishing pier,” Stephens said.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Putin’s back to wall; time is running out
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/02/europe/putin-time-running-out-analysis-intl-cmd/index.html
GIST	Time is running out for Russian President Vladimir Putin, and he knows it.

Meanwhile [his bombast](#) continues: announcing the [annexation of Ukrainian territories](#) on Friday, Putin declared Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson will become part of Russia “forever.” He is rushing to claim a victory and cement slender gains and sue for peace, running a dangerous political tab, regardless of the fanfare in Moscow.

He called on Ukraine to “cease fire” immediately and “sit down at the negotiating table,” but added: “We will not negotiate the choice of the people. It has been made. Russia will not betray it.”

He is doing his best to hide it, but he is losing his war in Ukraine. The writing is on the wall.

Andrey Kortunov, who runs the Kremlin-backed Russian International Affairs Council in Moscow, sees it, too. “President Putin wants to end this whole thing as fast as possible,” he told CNN.

Putin’s recent [heavy-handed conscription drive](#) for 300,000 troops won’t reverse his battlefield losses any time soon, and is backfiring at home, running him up a dangerous political tab.

According to official data from the EU, Georgia and Kazakhstan, around 220,000 Russians have [fled across their borders](#) since the “partial mobilization” was announced. The EU said its numbers – nearly 66,000 – represented a more than 30% increase from the previous week.

Independent Russian media quoting Russia’s revamped KGB, the FSB, put the total exodus even higher. They say more military age men have fled the country since conscription – 261,000 – than have so far fought in the war – an estimated 160,000 to 190,000.

CNN is unable to verify the Russian figures, but the 40 kilometers (around 25 miles) traffic tailbacks at the border with Georgia, and the long lines at crossings into Kazakhstan and Finland, speak to the backlash and the strengthening perception that Putin is losing his fabled touch at reading Russia’s mood.

The clock ticks loudly for Putin because his back is against the wall.

Kortunov says he doesn’t know what goes on in the Kremlin but that he understands the public mood over the huge costs and loss of life in the war. “Many people would start asking questions, why did we get into this mess? Why, you know, we lost so many people.”

Putin’s logical option, Kortunov says, is to declare victory and get out on his own terms. But for this he needs a significant achievement on the ground. “Russia cannot simply get to where it was, on the 24 February of this year, say, okay, you know, that’s fine. Our mission is accomplished. So we go home... ..There should be something that can be presented to the public as a victory.”

And this is the logic Putin appears to be following, rubber-stamping the sham referendums in Ukraine’s Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, and [declaring them part of Russia](#).

He used the same playbook annexing Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and now, like then, threatens potential nuclear strikes should Ukraine, backed by its Western allies, try to take the annexed territories back.

Gearing up for peace?

Western leaders are in a battle of brinksmanship with Putin. Last Sunday US national security adviser Jake Sullivan told NBC’s “Meet the Press” Washington would respond decisively if Russia deployed nuclear weapons against Ukraine and has made clear to Moscow the “catastrophic consequences” it would face. Leaders have also vowed not to recognize the regions as part of Russian territory.

US President Joe Biden said Moscow’s actions have “no legitimacy,” adding that Washington will continue to “always honor Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders.” The European Union said it “will never” recognize the Kremlin’s “illegal annexation,” and described the move as a “further violation of Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

There is little new in what Putin does, which, if nothing else, is making his moves more predictable, and therefore more readily analyzed.

Kurt Volker, who was US ambassador to NATO and US special representative to Ukraine under former President Donald Trump, believes Putin maybe gearing up for peace. “I think what he must be striving for, is to brandish the nuclear weapons, make all kinds of threats to Europe, and then say, okay, so let’s negotiate a settlement. And let me keep what I have already taken.”

Fiona Hill, who has advised three US Presidents on national security about Russia, also thinks Putin may be attempting an end game. “He feels a sense of acute urgency that he was losing momentum, and he’s now trying to exit the war in the same way that he entered it. With him being the person in charge and him framing the whole terms of any kind of negotiation.”

If these analyses are correct, they go a long way toward explaining the mystery of [what happened under the Baltic Sea](#) on Monday.

Both Danish and Swedish seismologists recorded explosive shockwaves from close to the seabed: the first, at around 2 a.m. local time, hitting 2.3 magnitude, then again, at around 7 p.m., registering 2.1.

Within hours, roiling patches of sea were discovered, the Danes and the Germans sent warships to secure the area, and Norway increased security around its oil and gas facilities.

So far, at least four leaks in Russia’s Nord Stream pipelines 1 and 2 have been discovered, each at the surface resembling a boiling cauldron, the largest one kilometer across, and together spewing industrial quantities of toxic greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Russian naval vessels were seen by European security officials in the area in the days prior, Western intelligence sources have said. NATO’s North Atlantic Council has described the damage as a “deliberate, reckless and irresponsible act of sabotage.”

Russia denies responsibility and says it has launched its own investigation. But former CIA chief John Brennan said Russia has the expertise to inflict this type of damage “all the signs point to some type of sabotage that these pipelines are only in about 200 feet or so of water and Russia does have an undersea capability to that will easily lay explosive devices by those pipelines.”

Brennan’s analysis is that Russia is the most likely culprit for the sabotage, and that Putin is likely trying to send a message: “It’s a signal to Europe that Russia can reach beyond Ukraine’s borders. So who knows what he might be planning next.”

Nord Stream 2 was never operational, and Nord Stream 1 had been throttled back by Putin as Europe raced to replenish gas reserves ahead of winter, while dialling back demands for Russian supplies and searching for replacement providers.

The Nord Stream [pipeline sabotage](#) could, according to Hill, be a last roll of the dice by Putin, so that “there’s no kind of turning back on the gas issues. And it’s not going to be possible for Europe to continue to build up its gas reserves for the winter. So what Putin is doing is throwing absolutely everything at this right now.”

Stretched supply lines

Another factor accelerating Putin’s thinking may be the approach of winter. Napoleon and Hitler both failed to take Moscow as supply lines running through Ukraine were too long and arduous in winter. Volker says that what historically saved Russia is now pressing down on Putin: “This time, it’s Russia that has to supply lines, trying to sustain its forces in Ukraine. That’s going to be very hard this winter. So all of a sudden, for all these factors, Putin’s timeline has moved up.”

The bottom line, said Hill, is that “this is the result of Ukraine gaining momentum on the ground on the battlefield and of Putin himself losing it, so he’s trying to adapt to the circumstances and basically take charge and get every advantage.”

No one knows what’s really going on in Putin’s mind. Kortunov doubts Putin will be willing to compromise beyond his own terms for peace, “not on the terms that are offered by President Zelensky, not on the terms which are offered by the West... [though] he should be ready to exercise a degree of flexibility. But we don’t know what these degrees [are] likely to be.”

According to Hill, Putin wants his negotiations to be with Biden and allies, not Ukraine: “He’s basically saying now you will have to negotiate with me and sue for peace. And that means recognizing what we have done on the ground in Ukraine.”

Having failed in the face of Western military unity backing Ukraine, Putin appears set to test Western resolve diplomatically, by trying to divide Western allies over terms for peace.

Volker expects Putin to pitch France and Germany first “to say, we need to end this war, we’re going to protect our territories at all costs, using any means necessary, and you need to put pressure on the Ukrainians to settle.”

If this is Putin’s plan, it could turn into his biggest strategic miscalculation yet. There is little Western appetite to see him stay in power – US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said as much in the summer – and even less to let down Ukraine after all its suffering.

Putin knows he is in a corner, but doesn’t seem to realize how small a space he has, and that of course is what’s most worrying – would he really make good on his nuclear threats?

The war in Ukraine may have entered a new phase, and Putin may have his back against the wall, but an end to the conflict could still be a very long way off.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Putin ally calls for low-yield nukes Ukraine
SOURCE	https://www.foxnews.com/world/putin-ally-recommends-russia-use-low-yield-nuclear-weapons-ukraine
GIST	<p>Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov on Saturday urged Moscow to consider deploying low-yield nuclear weapons in Ukraine after Russian forces retreated from the city of Lyman.</p> <p>In a post shared on Telegram, Kadyrov said he believes "more drastic measures should be taken, right up to the declaration of martial law in the border areas and the use of low-yield nuclear weapons."</p> <p>Kadyrov is a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who appointed him to govern restive Chechnya in 2007.</p> <p>The comments came after Russia lost its stronghold of Lyman in eastern Ukraine following a massive offensive from Ukraine.</p> <p>Russia has the largest atomic arsenal in the world, including low-yield tactical nuclear weapons designed for use against opposing armies.</p> <p>Other top Putin allies, including former president Dmitry Medvedev, have floated the idea that Russia may need to use nuclear weapons, but Kadyrov's suggestion was the most explicit.</p> <p>Putin said last week he was not bluffing when he vowed to use "all available means" to defend Russia's "territorial integrity." The U.S. has said it would respond decisively to any use of nuclear weapons and has threatened "catastrophic consequences" if Moscow deployed the weapons.</p>

	<p>Kadyrov has been a vocal supporter of the war against Ukraine, with Chechen forces forming part of the vanguard of the Russian army in the region.</p> <p>The Chechen leader said in his post that Colonel-General Alexander Lapin, commander of the Russian forces fighting at Lyman, was a "mediocrity." Kadyrov suggested the commander should be demoted to private and have his medals taken away.</p> <p>"Due to a lack of elementary military logistics, today we have abandoned several settlements and a large piece of territory," Kadyrov said.</p> <p>Kadyrov said he had warned Valery Gerasimov, chief of Russia's general staff, about the possibility of a defeat at Lyman two weeks ago but that Gerasimov had dismissed the idea.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Worried about economy? Good, bad news
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/10/01/economy-stock-markets-recession/
GIST	<p>It's normally peak season at Asurion Phone & Tech Repair, but Gean Rodriguez said foot traffic has slowed down in the last couple of weeks. The Chicago repair technician wonders if cooler weather is keeping customers at home, or if people are saving their money for the holidays.</p> <p>Without the answers, he's waiting for business to pick back up to more normal levels, all while the company contends with bungled supply chains and high costs for electronic parts.</p> <p>"We barely have anything at the moment," Rodriguez said. "We're hopeful for more business. Some people might try to save their money for the holidays, presents, reunions, things like that."</p> <p>The slowdown at Rodriguez's shop may offer a snapshot of the nation's economy as it heads into the final stretch of the year. Policymakers are rushing to cool off demand and get control of inflation, hiking interest rates at the most aggressive pace in decades. Fed officials have slashed their expectations for growth this year, and the risks of a recession, in the United States and around the globe, appear likelier by the week. A number of economists are bracing for a downturn in late 2022 or early 2023.</p> <p>But fresh data in recent days suggests the economy isn't sputtering quite yet, and that two of the economy's main engines are still revving. The labor market remains incredibly tight, based on data released Thursday. On Friday, a new government report showed consumer spending and personal incomes both rose in August, even while inflation remained high. Another survey showed that consumer confidence has recovered since early summer, when gas prices were much higher.</p> <p>Many households and businesses are caught in the middle of this economy tension, straining to absorb high prices but not yet experiencing the pain some Federal Reserve officials say is coming.</p> <p>Economic unease is sinking in. All the major stock indexes closed out the month on a bleak note, and the Dow Jones industrial average was down 5.4 percent for the third quarter, which ended Friday. The housing market is cooling off, with the highest mortgage rates in 15 years discouraging aspiring buyers. Retailers are already starting to discount items for the holidays, hoping to attract increasingly budget-conscious shoppers.</p> <p>U.S. stocks slipped Friday — with all three U.S. indexes down at least 1.5 percent — and closed out a brutal week, month and quarter. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 500 points on Friday and closed below 29,000 for the first time since November 2020. The S&P 500 was down 1.51 percent and notched its worst month since March 2020. All three indexes are down at least 21 percent for the year.</p> <p>On Friday morning, one analyst note summed up the mess with the title, "Wake Me Up When September Ends."</p>

There is growing evidence of jittery consumers. Apple shares slumped this week after a report that the company was cutting a planned production increase of its newest iPhone. In other parts of the tech industry — often seen as a bellwether for the economy as a whole — normally resilient companies indicated they were enforcing hiring freezes. Some analysts think the industry is possibly bracing for a slowdown in consumer spending.

“It shouldn’t surprise anybody that stocks are down, and they can’t really go up,” said Tom Essaye, president of Sevens Report Research. “We have to have good things happen, and we don’t have many good things happening.”

“We have an economy that is starting to show signs of slowing,” he added.

Perhaps the strongest example is the housing market, which has been cooling ever since the Fed began raising rates this spring. And it is clearly cooling faster as rates push higher. The average rate for a 30-year fixed mortgage, the most popular home-loan product, hit 6.7 percent this week, according to data released Thursday by Freddie Mac, a level unseen since July 2007.

U.S. home prices slid in July compared to June, marking the first month-to-month decline since January 2019, according to the closely watched S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller National Home Price Index. There are even early signs that rental prices may be easing.

People with lower incomes have been feeling the strain of inflation for months. More recently, the stock market’s tumble, and investor fears of a looming recession, are being felt by higher-income earners.

Dick Pfister, CEO of AlphaCore Wealth Advisory, said his clients — who generally are worth between \$1 million and \$15 million and are often planning for retirement or budgeting on a fixed income — are starting to be more proactive with budgeting as “stock, real estate and bonds have all gone down together,” affecting their assets.

“It’s taken them a little bit longer to feel the pain but it’s starting to affect them too,” he said.

Yet the stock market’s tumultuous quarter came as other parts of the economy churned. The strength of the job market has continued to surprise policymakers and economists alike, with employers adding 315,000 jobs in August. Consumer sentiment has improved since it bottomed out amid skyrocketing gas prices in June. And even though the economy shrunk in the first two quarters of the year, it doesn’t appear that the economy is in a recession — yet.

With uncertainty about what’s next, companies are showing signs that they are preparing for a possible drop-off in consumer spending if inflation persists at high levels and the stock market remains rocky.

Bloomberg reported this week that Apple is turning away from a planned increase in production of its newest iPhone. Apple did not confirm the report or comment.

Bank of America downgraded the stock in the days after the report, saying that “weaker consumer demand” could pose a risk to Apple’s business. Apple’s stock has spiraled down more than 7 percent since Monday afternoon, sending other tech stocks sinking.

Major tech firms are also tightening their budgets, particularly related to hiring.

The caution coming from tech companies could spook other industries, which are waiting to see if consumer spending will fall.

“[The tech giants] aren’t doing that for fun,” Essaye said. “They’re doing it because whatever they’re modeling, they’re seeing a drop in demand coming.”

It could just be cautious planning. It's too soon to say if Apple's reported production cut is a judgment call on overall consumer demand, said consumer tech analyst Carolina Milanese, who noted that Apple is reportedly seeing higher demand for its higher-priced iPhones.

"If Apple is seeing the impact of the economic recession then that's really bad news for everybody else, because Apple commands so much of the higher-end market," she said. "But at the same time, I do think it's a little early to draw conclusions."

Target and Walmart are trying to assuage consumer budget concerns by starting holiday discounts early this year, the major retailers said last week. And Amazon seems to be following suit. The e-commerce giant announced this week it would hold a "Prime Early Access Sale" on Oct. 11 and 12 for members of its subscription program. The sale has similarities to Amazon's annual Prime Day, which occurred in July. (Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

The early deals from retailers could be, in part, attributed to companies ensuring that they do not have too much inventory if consumers have less money in coming months, said Forrester retail analyst Sucharita Kodali. Nike's stock plummeted this week after the athletic retailer said it was increasing discounts and faced excess inventory.

Retailers aren't panicking, Kodali said, and business is still trending well. But they, like other industries, are on guard that consumer spending could be "curtailed" in the future.

"Everyone seems to be hunkering down anticipating a recession," she said in an email.

Signals from the Federal Reserve help explain why. Last week, the Federal Reserve hiked rates yet again by 0.75 percentage points, and the bank is expected to hike them twice more before the end of the year. Since the spring, the Fed has hoisted that rate from near zero to between 3 percent and 3.25 percent, and is expected to raise rates to 4.25 percent to 4.5 percent by the end of the year.

Policymakers say they won't back down on their rate increases until there are clear signs inflation is slowing down, despite recession risks. Economists say such aggressive hikes compound the risk that the Fed goes too far, especially since monetary policy operates with a lag and global central banks are all hoisting rates at once.

Tom Barkin, president of the Richmond Fed, sketched out two paths. If the Fed doesn't raise rates enough, he said, inflation could fester and force the central bank to act more aggressively later on. Or, he said, the Fed could step in aggressively now and attempt to push inflation back closer to normal levels.

"The analogy I've been experimenting with in my head is you're pulling at a stuck door, and you need to open the door, and so you keep sort of pulling at it," Barkin said in an interview with The Post. "If you pull too hard you might stumble, but hopefully stay on your feet. What you don't want to do is pull so hard you pull the doorknob out."

In Santa Monica, Calif., Bundy Auto Sales hasn't felt the consequences of the Fed pulling on that door just yet. Owner Sylvester Villareal said his company, which specializes in used cars and rentals, has a stable fleet and plenty of bookings, especially longer-term rentals for customers waiting for their Teslas to arrive.

Around town, Villareal sees other signs of an economy that isn't reversing yet. Costco is busy. So is a local high-end grocery store. Homes are still selling at high prices.

"Around where I work, it's not a blue-collar area, but it's not a rich area," Villareal said. "The houses sell immediately. That's just supply and demand. Because of interest rates, the payments are higher. But I don't see anything slowing up."

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SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/10/01/hurricane-ian-virginia-north-carolina-damage/
GIST	<p>NORTH PORT, Fla. — Search and rescue efforts continued along Florida’s west coast as residents confronted the sweeping devastation and rising death toll wrought by Hurricane Ian, one of the strongest storms ever to make landfall in the continental United States.</p> <p>The Florida Medical Examiners Commission said late Saturday that the storm had resulted in 44 deaths, most of them due to drowning. The figure is likely to rise as search and rescue teams continue to comb through the debris. Officials didn’t offer estimates on the number of people still missing three days after the storm first struck the state.</p> <p>Many of the officially recorded deaths were among senior citizens, reflecting a storm that has wielded an outsize impact on the elderly given the area is popular with retirees. About 33 percent of southwest Florida’s population is over 65, compared with nearly 17 percent of the U.S. population at large, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.</p> <p>In North Port, some retirees who evacuated to shelters didn’t have anywhere to go.</p> <p>Cynthia King, 91, rode out the storm at a friend’s house but was evacuated by boat early Saturday. She wonders where she will go next because she isn’t sure the house she originally left is habitable.</p> <p>“There are ups and downs to living in Florida, and this is definitely a down,” King said. “I have been sitting here a long time, and I just want someone who can take me home.”</p> <p>More than three days after Ian bulldozed into southwest Florida, communities farther inland in central Florida, including Orlando, are also inundated by water.</p> <p>The storm is estimated to have caused more than \$60 billion in property loss in Florida alone, making it the “second-largest catastrophe loss event on record” after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, according to the Insurance Information Institute, an industry trade group.</p> <p>The estimate is based on models that look at the scope of property damage and the population of affected areas. It’s limited to projected private insurer losses and litigation expenses, said Mark Friedlander, a spokesman for the institute. The figure does not include flood damage losses to be paid by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, he said.</p> <p>Late Saturday night, the White House announced travel plans for President Biden and first lady Jill Biden. The two will visit Puerto Rico, which was inundated with rain from Hurricane Fiona, on Monday, and then Florida on Wednesday.</p> <p>More than a million people in Florida remained without power as of 7 p.m. on Saturday, according to PowerOutage.us, which aggregates outage data. Officials warned that hazardous debris and electrical wires could be hidden in flooded areas and urged residents to take caution as they set about cleaning up the destruction.</p> <p>The historic rainfall brought record flooding to Orange, Volusia and Seminole counties, National Weather Service meteorologist Kole Fehling said. Significant flooding along the St. Johns River and Shingle Creek in towns outside Orlando could last for weeks, Fehling said.</p> <p>Florida has called in the Army Corps of Engineers to help local authorities repair damaged water systems.</p> <p>“The water and the electrical are really top priorities after the life rescue mission,” Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) said during a news conference Saturday. He said more than 54 percent of people who have lost power in Florida due to the storm now have electricity back. As of 7 a.m. Saturday, more than 1,100 rescues have been made, his administration said.</p>

For some of the 2 million hurricane evacuees, getting anywhere has proved difficult, as power outages continue and floodwaters persist. A 14-mile portion of Interstate 75 south of Tampa was shut down Friday and remained closed until late Saturday afternoon, a result of flooding from the Myakka River. A compromised levee forced evacuations in a Sarasota neighborhood.

The storm has proved particularly difficult for elderly Floridians with medical conditions.

Maria Acerbo, 81, rode out the storm with her husband, Tom, in St. James City before being rescued by the nonprofit Medic Corps. She was taken to Sarasota to stay with their daughter. Leaving a specially equipped handicapped bathroom and a hospital bed for her husband was particularly hard, she said, as was leaving the house in general.

“It was very, very sad because it was everything we have,” Acerbo said.

Still, she said she has been touched by how the community has come together.

“Everybody’s wonderful, more so when there’s a catastrophe,” Acerbo said. “Everybody did everything. Neighbors that I never knew. So beautiful.”

Many Floridians said the scope of the damage is beyond anything they have ever seen.

“Everything downstairs is destroyed,” Maureen Vath said of her house on Sanibel Island. “My piano was floating. The desks were in the wrong rooms. Our kitchen cutting board was on the floor, all of our papers, all of our files — everything was just a mess.”

Ahead of the hurricane, the predicted storm surge levels hadn’t worried Vath and her husband, Rich, who live inland from the beach but near a small canal. They had weathered Hurricane Charley in 2004 — and prepared with a generator in case of power loss. But they had to be rescued as the storm surge from Hurricane Ian flooded the barrier island.

“We were taught a lesson,” Vath said, noting that she and her husband also lost their two cars.

Officials in Lee County — which includes the areas hit hardest by the storm — faced questions about why the county didn’t issue a mandatory evacuation order in its most flood-prone areas until Tuesday morning, leaving many residents insufficient time to leave before the storm hit that afternoon. The county manager and sheriff’s offices didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment from The Washington Post.

Top officials in Florida said mandatory evacuation notices were issued in some cases the morning of the hurricane’s landfall because it was difficult to pinpoint where the storm was going — and initial projections showed it striking farther up the coast, near Tampa.

“When we did our briefings 72 hours before the storm on Sunday, the National Hurricane Center had this storm hitting Taylor County in north Florida. Fort Myers and Naples were not even in the cone,” DeSantis said during a news conference in St. Augustine on Friday. “So it was a situation where those folks at the local level, as that storm started to shift, then they took that data and then they acted appropriately.”

Across southwest Florida, deliveries of relief supplies were hampered by road closings. With I-75 closed, oil tankers, trucks carrying boats, and cars transporting relief workers were funneled onto one-lane streets, creating hours-long backups just to go a few miles.

Many gas stations also have been shuttered as a result of widespread power outages. Some motorists ran out of gas, leading to stalled vehicles. Fire engines and ambulances also struggled to navigate the gridlock.

For the past two nights, Darrien Harris and his wife felt like they lived on an island, as floodwater covered neighborhood streets in the city of North Port. The couple and their four children scratched aching skin covered in ant and mosquito bites.

“We are all tore up,” said Harris, 30, who said swarms of fire ants attack every time he tries to pick up a piece of debris. “Never in a million years did I think it would be this bad.”

On Saturday morning, the couple saw an opportunity to escape their home, and Darrien knew his 70-year-old mother — whose house is still surrounded by floodwater — needed oil for a generator required to operate her breathing machine.

But as the couple and their children drove to find oil, their car ran out of gas, stranding them in a parking lot under Florida’s blazing sun. They called a friend to bring them gas, but that person was stuck in a chaotic traffic backup after I-75 was closed. Eventually, they managed to secure the fuel.

Now that the water has receded on their neighborhood, the couple and their children — ages 15, 10, 11 and 7 — planned to sleep in a tent Saturday night in their front yard. They said it will be far cooler than sleeping indoors without power.

Rich Palmer, 66, also ran out of gas after a trip that usually takes him 20 minutes lasted nearly two hours. “It’s going to take at least year for us to get back to normal,” Palmer said. “And in some sections, it’s going to take a lot, lot longer.”

In Venice, Sam Sinnett battled the traffic to check on his church. The church was spared but he worried about the effect that chaos on the interstate was going to have on efforts to reach people in need.

“This will just slow the relief effort,” Sinnett said. “We have friends who have no power, no water, and everything in their freezer is going bad.”

The storm packed a second punch after it made landfall in South Carolina. Although no deaths have been reported in the state, some residents are also assessing the damage and hoping to resume normalcy.

Bill Ruff, who has only been living in his home on the inlet Pawleys Island for six weeks, evacuated his quadriplegic son and his wife 60 miles inland to Lake City on Friday morning. They returned Saturday to find four feet of water had invaded his carport. The boardwalk from the backyard to the dock had been pulled away from the shoreline, and the dock itself was missing.

In Florida, David Muench’s family has lived on Sanibel Island since the 1960s and has never seen the kind of storm surge that flooded the barrier island this week.

“We’ve heard about it, we know we were always warned about it, talked about it, but we never saw it,” Muench said. “We never saw it like this, until now.”

He said his family’s three homes all had been damaged, especially his parents’ house, but vowed to return and rebuild the properties soon.

“This is a big part of living in Florida,” he said. “This is living on the Gulf Coast. You have to expect that this is the type of event that could take place during your lifetime. And for me, this is the storm of my lifetime.”

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HEADLINE	10/01 Ukraine captain collects Russian corpses
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/01/ukraine-russia-corpses-collect-war/
GIST	TSYRKUNY, Ukraine — When there’s a Russian corpse that needs collecting, Capt. Anton gets the call. Sometimes, he’ll receive a text with coordinates of where the body is located. Other times, people offer to lead him to the site.

After single-handedly bagging more than 250 dead enemy soldiers, Anton has created something of a reputation in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region. Rather than spending time and energy searching for corpses, he can now work off referrals.

Last weekend, he followed a car of soldiers down a dirt road in Tsyркuny, a village outside of Kharkiv. At the edge of a field was a decayed body still in its military uniform. Anton hunched over it, snapping on gloves and sliding his hands into all of the dead soldier's pockets, looking for the man's documents. He carefully ran his fingers up and down the body before abruptly stopping at the boot.

"Everyone back away," Anton warned.

Four of the corpses he's recovered have been booby-trapped with explosives. This was a false alarm. He took off his gloves and put on a new pair.

A member of a small volunteer search unit code-named J9, Anton's macabre wartime profession is to find the dead Russians scattered around Ukraine after seven months of war. Anton said he often talks to the corpses he collects. Sometimes, he said, he can sense where they're located, as if they're calling out to him.

The remains go into a white bag and are then delivered to a morgue, where DNA samples are collected. The plan is to eventually return the bodies to Russia and to retrieve the bodies of Ukrainian soldiers killed in action in an exchange.

But sending the corpses back to Russia also sends the soldiers' families, and by extension the Russian public, a clear and certain message about the cost of President Vladimir Putin's war of choice against Ukraine. Their loved ones are dead. It is also an unmistakable warning to the men who are now being called up for military duty as part of Putin's recently announced partial mobilization.

Although Putin said only men with prior service in the armed forces would be activated, there are widespread reports in Russia that the rules are not being followed. Military analysts say many of these reinforcements could be sent to the front lines with little training, and end up poorly equipped and poorly led, given losses in the ranks of Russian officers.

Anton said he expects to be kept busy for the next few months helping those newly mobilized soldiers go home.

"Welcome to Ukraine, Russian meat," he said sarcastically. "My job will be around for a long time."

The job gives Anton, who offered only his first name and rank in keeping with his commander's orders, a unique perspective on Russian military losses during its war against Ukraine.

He said he alone has collected 100 corpses in September — since Ukraine's sweeping counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region forced Moscow's military into a hasty retreat. But he's also still collecting bodies that have been lying around since March, including the corpse he was called to collect in Tsyркuny last weekend.

Kyiv has claimed that more than 50,000 Russian troops have been killed in Ukraine — a number that can't be independently verified. Russian defense minister Sergei Shoigu recently claimed that approximately 6,000 Russian soldiers had died so far in Ukraine.

U.S. officials have cited heavy Russian losses but have estimated about half as many deaths as the Ukrainian figure, with tens of thousands more wounded.

As he examined the corpse in Tsyркuny, Anton didn't put on a face mask, seemingly unbothered by the smell. In fact, he said he likes it, calling the stench "raw" and "real" and comparing it to getting an

adrenaline rush on the battlefield. The remains were so decayed after lying around for months that the skull snapped off when Anton tried to move the body into a bag.

He picked up the skull and brought it close to his own face. “Oh what a fool you are,” he said, before setting it down. “At least someone came for him after all of this time,” said a soldier watching Anton work.

Another soldier cynically commented that this corpse was unlikely to be worth any sort of return.

Bodies of dead soldiers of higher rank tend to be more valuable, especially if they’re immediately identifiable. This one didn’t have any documentation on him, but his uniform was from the self-declared “Donetsk People’s Republic” — the Russian proxy force in eastern Ukraine. The arm bones from the elbow down were ripped off, likely by a dog. Anton found them in a field and packed them with the rest of the body.

Anton typically works alone, driving his matte green Mitsubishi SUV to wherever he’s called. He always has white body bags in the back. To keep the trunk of his car from getting too dirty, he tries to double-bag the corpses. On occasion, when there have been too many to fit inside the vehicle, he has strapped the bagged bodies to the roof before driving them to the morgue.

Anton got custom lettering for the bumper of one of his cars: “Collector of corpses of Ruzzian soldiers.”

Anton’s knapsack, where he keeps his gloves — he might go through more than six pairs during one body collection — is a trophy he said he lifted off a dead Russian National Guardsman. “There wasn’t even blood on it — and I washed it,” he explained.

According to the Geneva Conventions, countries at war must make every effort to search for, record and identify the dead left on the battlefield.

The enemy dead’s personal dignity must also be respected. It is a violation of the Geneva Conventions to defile dead bodies, but Ukrainian soldiers often keep small souvenirs from the Russians. At one point, Ukraine had accumulated so many enemy corpses that it was keeping them in a refrigerated train car.

More than 500 Ukrainian bodies have been repatriated as of August, with trades sometimes happening in person in the Zaporizhzhia region, which is partially occupied by Russian troops. Those are the moments that make Anton’s job meaningful, he said.

Otherwise, Anton said he has no interest in helping dead Russians return home where they can receive a proper burial — especially since the bodies he tends to might have killed his own comrades.

“I think about our Ukrainian mothers every time I go retrieve one of these Russian corpses,” he said. “I want our mothers to bury our boys here at home. I don’t care about the Russian mothers. It doesn’t matter to me what will happen to these bodies later.”

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HEADLINE	10/02 Less food market discounts as prices rise
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/supermarket-discounts-are-harder-to-find-as-food-prices-rise-11664662212?mod=hp_lead_pos3
GIST	<p>In U.S. supermarkets, toilet paper and noodles are back in stock, but one prepandemic staple has yet to fully return: discounts.</p> <p>With food inflation running at the highest rate in more than 40 years, American shoppers are finding less relief from deals like “buy one, get one free” promotions, or 99-cent two-liter bottles of soda, according to supermarket executives and analysts.</p>

The frequency and depth of U.S. grocery-store discounts remain below 2019 levels, according to retailers, prompting grocers to run sales on less popular items, or lose money offering discounts on staple products proven to bring in shoppers.

On average, 20.6% of food and beverage products were sold with price reductions in the third quarter of this year, according to research firm Information Resources Inc., down from 25.7% for the same period in 2019. Promotional levels are down from 2019 levels for all grocery categories except for meat, data show.

Food makers, which typically provide funding to supermarkets to support discounts and special sales, said ongoing shortages and supply-chain problems are limiting their production and leaving [fewer products available to be put on sale](#). Supermarket companies, already paying higher wholesale prices to keep their shelves stocked, are left to spend more of their own money to advertise and support discount deals, executives said.

Other corners of the retail industry are grappling with extra inventory—and the [necessity of steep discounts](#). [Macy's Inc.](#), [Walmart Inc.](#) and [Target Corp.](#) in recent months have used markdowns to clear out excess stock after miscalculating customer demand earlier in the year. On Thursday, [Nike Inc.](#) reported a steep rise in inventory and [said it would mark down more goods](#) heading into the holidays.

Kosta Drosos, general manager of Fresh Market Place in Chicago, said that the grocer hasn't run discounts on yogurt and milk products in nearly five months. The specials that Fresh Market is able to run these days tend to be small and seldom for the staples that draw customers, he said.

Mr. Drosos said he recently turned down a 10% discount offered by a broth manufacturer, which he said came with a requirement that his store buy 1,200 units per flavor. Mr. Drosos said a 25-cent discount on the retail price wasn't worth the shelf space commitment.

Instead, Mr. Drosos said, Fresh Market is absorbing losses to run promotions on proven sellers, including a Labor Day weekend sale on ketchup, mustard and other items. "It's hard to run anything on promo," he said.

Food manufacturers typically pay back about 15% to 18% of sales at a given retailer to fund promotions, said Jim Hertel, senior vice president at Inmar Intelligence, a market research firm. Discounts, aimed to boost sales, include weekly circulars, price cuts on tags and displays in more favorable locations of the store such as "end caps" of aisles. For retailers, promotions are among the biggest drivers of traffic and a way to encourage customers to spend more, he said.

In the Midwest, grocery chain B&R Stores Inc. featured specials on fresh chicken products from Sanderson Farms Inc. nearly every week before the pandemic, said B&R President Mark Griffin, with the company providing money to support ads and the discounted products. Sanderson didn't provide any promotional funding for fresh chicken for about two years before restoring it in October, he said. Wayne-Sanderson Farms, as the company is known following its merger this year with rival Wayne Farms LLC, had no comment.

John Frey, a retiree who lives with his wife in Kingsport, Tenn., said that big discounts used to be common at his nearby Aldi store. Recently, he said, he hasn't seen many bargains other than some meat products nearing the end of their sell-by date, or packaged items like pizza that were damaged during delivery.

"It has changed the way I cook and prep," Mr. Frey said, adding that he is freezing more food and figuring out how to make cheaper dishes.

Scott Patton, vice president of national buying at Aldi, said that the discount chain is focused on offering every product at the lowest possible price and that it offers additional price drops on a selection of items.

Food manufacturers and sellers said promotions are unlikely to increase until supply challenges subside.

Kraft Heinz Co. said recently that its discounts haven't returned to 2019 levels, and that it is using data analysis to run more productive sales rather than lose money on discounting items.

Sabra Dipping Co. is running promotions less frequently as the hummus maker revamps supply after shortages earlier this year, said CEO Joey Bergstein.

"What we never want to do is create more demand than we can fulfill," he said. Sabra is reviewing its promotions strategy, Mr. Bergstein said, after determining that the company in the past ran too many discounts to expand the business.

Supermarket company Albertsons Cos., which operates the Safeway and Jewel-Osco chains, has said it expects promotions to stay low at least throughout the year.

Grocers said that volumes are getting squeezed, too, as shoppers buy fewer products due to high prices.

Skogen's Foodliner Inc., which operates as Festival Foods, is investing about 15% more on discounts from a year ago, said Randall Munns, chief operating officer. Even then, he said, discounts aren't steep enough to drive traffic, and gone are the big sale deals that shoppers have been accustomed to: a pound of strawberries for 99 cents or a dozen eggs for 48 cents.

"Guests aren't saying, 'That's a great deal.' They are not going to stock up," Mr. Munns said.

Roche Bros. Inc., a Massachusetts-based chain with 20 stores, cut its circulars by about 30% to 40% this summer, compared with prepandemic levels, said Arthur Ackles, who leads its merchandising and buying.

"It's a shock for people," he said.

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HEADLINE	09/30 Iran: separatists kill 19, Guard commander
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/iran-middle-east-dubai-united-arab-emirates-amnesty-international-479f1b059c81697b76cf8206895b92e8
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iranian state-linked media reported late Friday that up to 19 people, including a commander in the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, were killed in an attack by armed separatists on a police base in the eastern city of Zahedan.</p> <p>It was not immediately clear if the attack, which unfolded earlier in the day as crowds had gathered at a nearby mosque for Friday prayers, was related to the nationwide antigovernment protests gripping Iran. The reports did not identify the separatist group.</p> <p>In a separate development, Iran said it has arrested nine foreigners linked to the protests, which authorities have blamed on hostile foreign entities, without providing evidence.</p> <p>State TV said armed separatists concealed themselves among worshippers and attacked a police base near the mosque in Zahedan. The state-run IRNA news agency cited witnesses as saying that 19 people were killed and 15 wounded, but there was no official confirmation.</p> <p>The semiofficial Tasnim news agency reported that the head of the Guard's intelligence department, Seyyed Ali Mousavi, was shot during the attack and later died.</p> <p>The Sistan and Baluchestan province borders Afghanistan and Pakistan, and has seen previous attacks on security forces by ethnic Baluchi separatists.</p> <p>Thousands of Iranians have taken to the streets over the last two weeks in protests over the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who had been detained by the morality police in the capital, Tehran, for allegedly wearing her mandatory Islamic headscarf too loosely.</p>

The protesters have vented [anger over the treatment of women](#) and wider repression in the Islamic Republic. The nationwide demonstrations rapidly escalated into calls for the overthrow of the clerical establishment that has ruled Iran since its 1979 Islamic revolution.

The protests have drawn supporters from various ethnic groups, [including Kurdish opposition movements](#) in the northwest that operate along the border with neighboring Iraq. Amini was an Iranian Kurd, and the protests first erupted in Kurdish areas.

Iran's Intelligence Ministry said the nine foreigners arrested include citizens of Germany, Poland, Italy, France, the Netherlands and Sweden, state news agency IRNA reported. It was not immediately clear if they were Iranians with dual citizenship.

The ministry did not provide evidence for any of its claims.

Iran has detained a number of Iranians with dual citizenship over the years, accusing them of spying or otherwise undermining national security. Critics accuse Iran of using such detainees as bargaining chips to secure concessions from the international community.

A number of Europeans were detained in Iran in recent months, including a Swedish tourist, a Polish scientist and others. Two French citizens arrested in June are accused of meeting with protesting teachers and taking part in an antigovernment rally.

Earlier Friday, the London-based rights group Amnesty International said it had acquired leaked government documents showing that Iran had ordered its security forces to "severely confront" protesters as the demonstrations gathered strength earlier this month.

The London-based rights group said security forces have killed at least 52 people since protests over the Amini's death began nearly two weeks ago, including by firing live ammunition into crowds and beating protesters with batons.

It says security forces have also beaten and groped female protesters who remove their headscarves to protest the treatment of women by Iran's theocracy.

Amnesty said it obtained a leaked copy of an official document saying that the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces ordered commanders on Sept. 21 to "severely confront troublemakers and anti-revolutionaries." The rights group says the use of lethal force escalated later that evening, with at least 34 people killed that night alone.

It said another leaked document shows that, two days later, the commander in Mazandran province ordered security forces to "confront mercilessly, going as far as causing deaths, any unrest by rioters and anti-Revolutionaries," referring to those opposed to Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, which brought the clerics to power.

Amnesty did not say how it acquired the documents. There was no immediate comment from Iranian authorities.

Iranian state TV has reported that at least 41 protesters and police have been killed since the demonstrations began Sept. 17. An Associated Press count of official statements by authorities tallied at least 14 dead, with more than 1,500 demonstrators arrested.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists says at least 28 reporters have been arrested.

Iranian authorities have severely restricted internet access and blocked access to Instagram and WhatsApp, popular social media applications that are also used by the protesters to organize and share information.

	<p>That makes it difficult to gauge the extent of the protests, particularly outside the capital, Tehran. Iranian media have only sporadically covered the demonstrations.</p> <p>Iranians have long used virtual private networks and proxies to get around the government's internet restrictions.</p> <p>Shervin Hajipour, an amateur singer in Iran, recently posted a song on Instagram based on tweets about Amini that received more than 40 million views in less than 48 hours before it was taken down. Iran Human Rights Organization, a group based in Norway, said that Hajipour has reportedly been arrested. There was no official confirmation.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Worst Brazil forest fires in decade
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/jair-bolsonaro-fires-forests-campaigns-presidential-elections-c2373cf91392bd5590205103e801dcd8
GIST	<p>RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — September has come and gone, marking another painful milestone for the world's largest rainforest. It's the worst month for fire in the Amazon in over a decade.</p> <p>Satellite sensors detected over 42,000 fires in 30 days according to Brazil's national space institute. It is the first time since 2010 that fires in the Amazon surpassed 40,000 in a single month.</p> <p>This September was two and a half times worse than last. Coming at the peak of the dry season, it's usually the worst month not only for fire but also for deforestation.</p> <p>The official data for forest loss only goes through September 23 so far, yet is already 14% more devastating than September 2021. In just those three weeks, the Amazon lost 1,120 square kilometers of rainforest (434 square miles), an area larger than New York City.</p> <p>The surge in forest fire occurs amid a polarizing presidential campaign. Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro is seeking a second four-year term against leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who ruled Brazil between 2003 and 2010 and leads in the polls. The first round of the election is on Sunday.</p> <p>Despite the smoke clogging the air of entire Amazon cities, state elections have largely ignored environmental issues. Besides the President, Brazilians will also elect governors and state and national parliaments.</p> <p>In Para state, worst for both deforestation and fire, the subject of deforestation was barely touched on during a TV debate among gubernatorial candidates held Tuesday by the Globo network.</p> <p>Over an hour and a half, only one candidate mentioned the steep increase in deforestation. Globo, Brazil's leading television network, did not even select it as one of eight debate topics.</p> <p>Protecting the forest is not a high-priority for the population, after years of pandemic and a deteriorating economy, Paulo Barreto, a researcher with the nonprofit Amazon Institute of People and the Environment, told the Associated Press. "But the fact that journalists don't ask is an even bigger problem." Deforestation can lead to more poverty, he said. "On the other hand, there are growing economic opportunities related to conservation."</p> <p>Fire in the Amazon is almost always deliberately set, to improve cattle pasture or burn recently-felled trees once they are dry. Often the fires burn out of control and reach pristine forest areas.</p> <p>Studies have shown that deforestation rates peak in election years, and 2022 has been particularly intense because of Bolsonaro's anti-environmental rhetoric, according to analysts.</p>

“With a chance of changing the government to one that promises more rigor, it seems that the deforesters are taking advantage of the possibility that the party’s over,” Barreto said.

Since Bolsonaro took office, in 2019, deforestation has been on the rise, as his administration has defanged environmental authorities and backed measures to loosen land protections, emboldening environmental offenders.

The far-right leader has repeatedly denied that fire is even increasing, despite official data from his government agency. On Thursday night, during the final Presidential debate before the vote, he said that forest fires occur periodically in the Amazon, dismissed the criticism as a “war of narratives,” and said Brazil “is an example to the world” on conservation.

It was an answer to Simone Tebet, a senator who is close to agribusiness leaders and considered a moderate in the race. In one of the few moments free of personal insults, she criticized Bolsonaro’s environmental record in a segment related to climate change.

“Your administration is the one that has set biomes, forests and my Pantanal wetlands on fire. Your administration favored miners and loggers, and protected them,” she said. “You, in this regard, were the worst president in Brazil’s history.”

During his campaign, da Silva promised to restore law enforcement and gained support from Indigenous and environmental leaders, such as former Environment Minister Marina Silva. She had broken publicly with the former president over his push to build hydroelectric dams and other development initiatives in the Amazon.

In announcing her support during a meeting with da Silva a few weeks ago, she called Bolsonaro a threat to Brazil’s democracy. She said the country is facing a critical moment on issues ranging from the environment to the economy.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Eastern Congo rebel violence, hunger soars
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/health-business-government-and-politics-food-crisis-e5ef40c8c364859e0a79069b3cd2bba2
GIST	<p>NYIRAGONGO, Congo (AP) — The last thing Pasika Bagerimana remembers before her sons died were their cries of hunger. But the 25-year-old mother had nothing to feed them.</p> <p>““Mom, I need to eat. Can you give me food?”” they pleaded with her. Daniel, 2, and Bonane, 5, died just weeks apart in July after fleeing violence in their village in eastern Congo between M23 rebels and government forces.</p> <p>Bagerimana worries her remaining two children might be next. “Hunger is killing people,” she says, seated in a cramped room she now shares with dozens of other displaced people.</p> <p>Hunger is soaring across parts of Congo’s war-torn North Kivu province where the fighting between M23 rebels and government soldiers has been raging since November, according to aid workers, civilians and health workers.</p> <p>Despite being the most fertile region in eastern Congo, nearly 260,000 people are facing extreme food insecurity in Nyiragongo and Rutshuru territories, according to an internal draft assessment by aid groups seen by The Associated Press.</p> <p>Nyiragongo has the highest prevalence of hunger in the province and Rutshuru, where the fighting is concentrated also “remains a concern,” the report said.</p>

Congo is the No. 1 country in the world in need of food assistance, according to an unpublished draft food security report by aid agencies and the government seen by the AP. At least 26 million people — more than a quarter of the population — acutely face food insecurity in large part because of violence. Economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine are also making things worse.

Only 10% of those targeted by aid groups this year received the full recommended food assistance because of a lack of funds and security concerns restricting access. Humanitarians warn that if the fighting continues, millions of people could face severe hunger.

“The situation was already dire and this conflict is just adding another layer and making everything worse,” said Marc Sekpon, head of Congo’s food security coordination body, a group of international aid agencies focused on food security strategy and intervention.

“The majority of people in these territories either grow what they eat or get their food from the market,” he said. “The increase of food prices in the province and their reduced access to agricultural production seriously jeopardizes their ability to get food.”

During trips to three towns in Rutshuru and Nyiragongo in September, where nearly 200,000 people have been displaced, people told the AP how violence had forced them from their farms, leaving recently harvested food behind to rot.

Civilians said they had no land to cultivate, and they couldn’t earn enough money in town to buy food. Out of nearly 3,000 displaced families in Nyiragongo, 450 had received help, said Florence Biyoyiki the deputy president of a makeshift displacement site.

Health staff at the main hospital in Nyiragongo said the number of severely malnourished children nearly tripled between April to July — 17 to 49. A 2-year-old boy died from malnutrition in July, said Marc Lukando, a nurse at the clinic.

The hospital has nothing to feed malnourished children, he says. And when it is able to provide families with nutritional supplements, parents sometimes sell it and use the money to feed the whole family instead of giving it to their children, he said.

While the M23 rebels had been largely dormant for nearly a decade, they’ve resurfaced demonstrating increased firepower and seizing chunks of territory and have been accused by rights groups and communities of killing civilians. One person living under M23 who didn’t want to be named for fear of his safety, told the AP that the group forces residents to pay a \$5 tax each time they want to access their fields. M23 fighters recently told villagers they needed to bring the group bags of beans or be evicted, he said.

Still, some people are so desperate for food they are risking their lives to return to towns under rebel control.

Chantale Dusabe fled her village in June after husband was killed by a bomb that exploded in their compound. She returned days later in spite of the risk, but has been too terrified to go back.

“I knew M23 was there, but the children were hungry,” said Dusabe, who managed to retrieve some bananas.

In a written statement to the AP, the M23 political spokesman, Lawrence Kanyuka, said people are allowed to move freely and that the accusations of human rights abuses were baseless.

The government is planning a counteroffensive to retake approximately 30% of territory that’s been captured by M23, said Luc Albert Bakole, the territorial administrator for Rutshuru.

“We must do our best to take back all the territory under the enemy’s control, so that our people can return home and resume their lives normally,” he said.

	<p>But while the government struggles to regain ground, people are starving. Doctors Without Borders said it's seen a 50% increase in the admission of severely malnourished children in the hospital in Rutshuru town between January and July this year compared with the same period last year.</p> <p>In August, Rahabu Maombi brought her malnourished daughter to Rutshuru hospital after the 22-year-old mother fled fighting in a nearby village. Since being displaced, the family eats only once a day, she said.</p> <p>Cradling her 18-month-old as she feeds from a tube in her nose, Maombi says she can't stop worrying that her daughter might die.</p> <p>"If there was no war, my baby wouldn't be in this situation," she said. "This war has destroyed so many things in our lives."</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Ukraine counteroffensive, Russia setback
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-zelenskyy-business-moscow-3e56d9f40590b8cca06b1b8aa6b65abd
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia attacked the Ukrainian president's hometown with suicide drones on Sunday, and Ukraine pushed ahead with its counteroffensive after taking back control of a strategic eastern city.</p> <p>Russia's loss of Lyman, which it had been using as a transport and logistics hub, is a new blow to the Kremlin as it seeks to escalate the war by illegally annexing four regions of Ukraine.</p> <p>"The Ukrainian flag is already in Lyman," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly address. "Over the past week, there have been more Ukrainian flags in the Donbas. In a week there will be even more."</p> <p>In southern Ukraine, Zelenskyy's hometown Krivyi Rih came under Russian attack by a suicide drone that struck a school early Sunday and destroyed two stories of it, said Valentyn Reznichenko, the governor of Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region.</p> <p>A fire sparked by the drone attack has been put out, he said.</p> <p>Russia in recent weeks has begun using Iranian-made suicide drones to attack targets in Ukraine. In southern Ukraine, the Ukrainian air force said it shot down five Iranian-made drones overnight, while two others made it through air defenses.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Russian attacks also targeted the city of Zaporizhzhia, authorities said Sunday.</p> <p>Ukraine's military said Sunday it carried out a strike on a Russian ammunition depot in the country's south, in Chernihiv, and hitting other Russian command posts, ammunition depots and two S-300 anti-aircraft batteries.</p> <p>The reports of military activity couldn't be immediately verified.</p> <p>After being encircled by Ukrainian forces, Russia pulled troops out Saturday from Lyman in the east in what the British military described as a "significant political setback" for Moscow. Taking the city paves the way for Ukrainian troops to potentially push farther into territory Russia has occupied.</p> <p>Lyman had been an important link in the Russian front line for ground communications and logistics. Lyman is in the Donetsk region near the border with Luhansk, two regions that Russia annexed Friday after forcing the population to vote in referendums at gunpoint.</p>

	<p>Russia's Defense Ministry claimed to have inflicted damage on Ukrainian forces in battling to hold Lyman, but said outnumbered Russian troops were withdrawn to more favorable positions.</p> <p>In a daily intelligence briefing, the British Defense Ministry called Lyman crucial because it has "a key road crossing over the Siversky Donets River, behind which Russia has been attempting to consolidate its defenses."</p> <p>The British said they believed that the city had been held by "undermanned elements" prior to the Russian withdrawal.</p> <p>Moscow's withdrawal from Lyman prompted immediate criticism from some Russian officials.</p> <p>"Further losses of territory in illegally occupied territories will almost certainly lead to an intensification of this public criticism and increase the pressure on senior commanders," the British military briefing said.</p> <p>Ukrainian forces have retaken swaths of territory in a counteroffensive that started in September and has humiliated and angered Russia.</p> <p>Russian President Vladimir Putin frames the Ukrainian gains as a U.S.-orchestrated effort to destroy Russia and this week heightened threats of nuclear force in some of his toughest, most anti-Western rhetoric to date.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 River floods menaces Florida inland towns
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/hurricanes-floods-suburbs-sarasota-climate-and-environment-131a7ee26b24bcd611b96ada2b9d2a63
GIST	<p>NORTH PORT, Fla. (AP) — As Hurricane Ian ravaged coastal towns in southwest Florida, residents of this quiet suburb thought they would be safe, having no beach and living outside areas under evacuation orders. But then the water kept flowing in.</p> <p>Since Ian's passage, water levels have risen significantly, turning roads into canals, reaching mailboxes, flooding vehicles, blocking a stretch of highway and a main ramp into the city, and leaving families trapped in their waterlogged homes. Now, as days go by, residents of the Sarasota suburb of North Port are beginning to run out of food and water.</p> <p>"Water just keeps going up. Who knows when it is going to stop," said Samuel Almanzar, 42. He was rescued by crews Friday along with his father, wife and two children, 11 and 6.</p> <p>As rescue efforts wrapped up Friday, local officials recommended that people evacuate neighborhoods that are flooding. They said waters in some areas would continue to rise over the next two days. The Florida Department of Transportation was forced to close a stretch of Interstate 75 in both directions late Friday because water from the Myakka River had risen so high it flooded parts of the highway days after the storm.</p> <p>The highway closure snarled traffic Friday between the storm-slammed region straddling Port Charlotte and Fort Myers and the main metropolis to the north, the Tampa area. That added a major challenge to rescue and supply delivery efforts.</p> <p>On Saturday, authorities said waters had receded enough that they could fully reopen I-75. But they added that monitors were constantly watching the ever shifting river levels near the key rescue and supply corridor.</p> <p>The floods in North Port show the impact of Ian has not been confined to the beaches and tourist towns. The heavy rains from the storm have ended up flowing into suburban and inland towns not part of hurricane warnings.</p>

It's the rising rivers that do it because of the hurricane's deluge, which continues to cause havoc long after the winds have passed. And it's leading to rescue efforts not that different from those on the coasts.

Floods were reported all across the center of the state: around Orlando and its theme parks, south to Kissimmee, east to Daytona Beach, Arcadia cattle country. People near rivers were deeply affected.

Dozens of National Guardsmen arrived Friday in North Port— about 85 miles (140 kilometers) south of Tampa — to speed up efforts started Wednesday by firefighters from other states and counties. And city officials were scrambling to open an evacuation center at a high school.

A mother of two cried on the phone, trying to connect with her parents so they could pick them up after coming out of her flooded neighborhood. A woman showed a map to rescuers to reach families with children in the area upon learning water had started to rise inside their homes. A man waded through waist-deep waters with his 8-year-old daughter, trying to venture out to get supplies.

Megan Blevins, who works at a restaurant in nearby Venice, was trying to help the families of coworkers get out but said some were not accessible due to structures collapsing and leaving certain streets without access.

"We can't get people. We can't get people to them. There are some older folks we are trying to get to because they can't move," she said.

Aimee Bowden, 47, said a tree fell on her house, opening a hole in her kitchen and dining room and letting water pour in. Firefighters going back and forth to pick up families with children evacuated her, with her husband and 13-year-old son in a rescue boat.

"I was terrified. You have your whole life uprooted," Bowden said. "You try to just keep thinking about what you need to do."

Just west of North Port, the Myakka River was forecast by the National Weather Service to reach record flood stage Friday at 12.55 feet (3.8 meters) and then crest a bit higher before receding.

The nearby Peace River was set to hit an even higher mark: almost 24 feet (7.3 meters), which is about twice the previous record. It runs through mainly rural areas, especially the cattle town of Arcadia which is home to a well-known Florida rodeo.

There was plenty of concern Friday about the steadily rising river.

"The unpredictability of the river is real, and people are in real danger," said DeSoto County Fire Chief Chad Jorgensen in a county post. "If you are in these areas, you need to get out now."

After crossing Florida, Ian moved over the Atlantic Ocean where it curved back into South Carolina on Friday. More than two dozen deaths have been blamed on the storm.

Elvis Padron, 40, a construction worker now applying for political asylum, fled Venezuela with his wife and 8-year-old daughter and crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in February, only to face more hardship.

"My wife refuses to leave. She wants to stay," said Padron, who waded through the waters to find more supplies and tried to convince his wife on the phone they should leave. "I feel like we don't have much time left."

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HEADLINE	10/01 Ian shows risks, costs living barrier islands
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SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/hurricanes-florida-storms-climate-and-environment-hurricane-ian-9e6d1d3fee5e7334e14cc3da6c113c53
GIST	<p>SANIBEL ISLAND, Fla. (AP) — When Hurricane Ian struck Florida’s Gulf Coast, it washed out the bottom level of David Muench’s home on the barrier island of Sanibel along with several cars, a Harley-Davidson and a boat.</p> <p>His parents’ house was among those destroyed by the storm that killed at least two people there, and the lone bridge to the crescent-shaped island collapsed, cutting off access by car to the mainland for its 6,300 residents.</p> <p>Hurricane Ian underscores the vulnerability of the nation’s barrier islands and the increasing costs of people living on the thin strips of land that parallel the coast. As hurricanes become more destructive, experts question whether such exposed communities can keep rebuilding in the face of climate change.</p> <p>“This is a Hurricane Katrina-scale event, where you’re having to rebuild everything, including the infrastructure,” said Jesse M. Keenan, a real estate professor at Tulane University’s School of Architecture. “We can’t build back everything to what it was — we can’t afford that.”</p> <p>Ian slammed into southwest Florida as a Category 4 hurricane Wednesday with among the highest windspeeds in U.S. history — in nearly the same spot where Hurricane Charley, also a Category 4, caused major damage in 2004.</p> <p>Of the 50 tropical cyclones that have come within 100 nautical miles of the Fort Myers area since 1873, 23 have been hurricanes that passed within 75 miles (120 kilometers) of Sanibel Island, according to the city’s website. Each posed “a significant threat to property and lives on the island at some point in its life cycle.”</p> <p>In 1921, a massive hurricane wiped out half of neighboring Captiva’s landmass and cut that island in two, according to the Sanibel Historical Museum & Village.</p> <p>The latest storm has initiated a new cycle of damage and repair on Sanibel that’s played out on many other barrier islands, from the New Jersey shore and North Carolina’s Outer Banks to a ribbon of land along the Louisiana coast.</p> <p>Barrier islands were never an ideal place for development, experts say. They typically form as waves deposit sediment off the mainland. And they move based on weather patterns and other ocean forces. Some even disappear.</p> <p>Building on the islands and holding them in place with beach replenishment programs just makes them more vulnerable to destruction because they can no longer move, according to experts.</p> <p>“They move at the whims of the storms,” said Anna Linhoss, a professor of biosystems engineering at Auburn University. “And if you build on them, you’re just waiting for a storm to take them away.”</p> <p>After devastating parts Florida, Ian made landfall again in South Carolina, where Pawleys Island was among the hardest hit places. Friday’s winds and rains broke apart the barrier island’s main pier, one of several in the state to crumble and wash away.</p> <p>On Saturday, homeowners in the beach community about 73 miles (120 kilometers) up the coast from Charleston struggled to assess damage from storm. The causeways connecting the island to the mainland were strewn with palm fronds, pine needles and even a kayak retrieved from a nearby shoreline.</p> <p>Like Pawleys Island, many barrier island communities anchor long-entrenched tourist economies, which are often the source of crucial tax dollars. At the same time, the cost of rebuilding them is often high because they’re home to many expensive properties, such as vacation homes.</p>

“When there’s a disaster like this, we will pour tens of billions of public dollars into these communities to help them rebuild,” said Robert S. Young, director of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, which is a joint venture between Duke University and Western Carolina University.

“And we will ask very little for that money in return in terms of taking a step back from places that are incredibly exposed to hazards and making sure that we never have this kind of a disaster again,” Young said.

But any big changes to the standard disaster response will be complicated, said Dawn Shirreffs, Florida director of the Environmental Defense Fund.

Challenges could include decisions on who participates in programs that elevate flood-prone homes or programs that buy those homes and tear them down. Planting mangroves to prevent erosion could end up blocking someone’s view.

Many homeowners bought their properties before people were fully aware of climate change and the risks of sea-level rise, Shirreffs said.

Keenan, the Tulane professor, said Sanibel will undoubtedly be changed by Hurricane Ian, based on the research he’s done. There will be fewer government resources to help people rebuild. Those with fewer means and who are underinsured will likely move. People with financial means will stay.

“Sanibel will just be an enclave for the ultrawealthy,” Keenan said.

But Muench, the Sanibel resident, said homeowners and business owners are sure to rebuild their properties.

His family has owned and operated a campground on the island for three generations. The island, he said, is “paradise — we live in the most beautiful place on Earth.”

“We are going to continue to exist on Sanibel,” Muench, 52, said from Fort Myers on Friday after evacuating Sanibel. “Give us five years, and you might not even notice if you didn’t know.”

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HEADLINE	10/01 Ian death toll rises; focus: rescue, recovery
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/hurricanes-floods-florida-north-carolina-caribbean-f537bc6e6d9481c4680a4a7af238bc6c
GIST	<p>FORT MYERS, Fla. (AP) — Dozens of Florida residents left their flooded and splintered homes by boat and by air on Saturday as rescuers continued to search for survivors in the wake of Hurricane Ian, while authorities in South Carolina and North Carolina began taking stock of their losses.</p> <p>The death toll from the storm, one of the strongest hurricanes by wind speed to ever hit the U.S., grew to more than four dozen, with 47 deaths confirmed in Florida, four in North Carolina and three in Cuba. The storm weakened Saturday as it rolled into the mid-Atlantic, but not before it washed out bridges and piers, hurdled massive boats into buildings onshore and sheared roofs off homes, leaving hundreds of thousands without power.</p> <p>The bulk of the deaths confirmed in Florida were from drowning in storm waters, but others from Ian’s tragic aftereffects. An older couple died when they lost power and their oxygen machines shut off, authorities said.</p> <p>As of Saturday, more than 1,000 people had been rescued from flooded areas along Florida’s southwestern coast alone, Daniel Hokanson, a four-star general and head of the National Guard, told The Associated Press while airborne to Florida.</p>

Later in the evening, the White House announced that President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden would travel to Florida on Wednesday. No other details of Biden's visit were immediately released.

Chris Schnapp was at the Port Sanibel Marina in Fort Myers on Saturday, waiting to see whether her 83-year-old mother-in-law had been evacuated from Sanibel Island. A pontoon boat arrived carrying a load of passengers from the island — with suitcases and animals in tow — but Schnapp's mother-in-law was not among them.

"She stayed on the island. My brother-in-law and sister-in-law own two businesses over there. They evacuated. She did not want to go," Schnapp said. Now, she said, she wasn't sure if her mother-in-law was still on the island or had been taken to a shelter somewhere.

On Pine Island, the largest barrier island off Florida's Gulf Coast, houses were reduced to splinters and boats littered roadways as a volunteer rescue group went door-to-door, asking residents if they wanted to be evacuated. People described the horror of being trapped in their homes as water kept rising.

"The water just kept pounding the house and we watched, boats, houses — we watched everything just go flying by," Joe Conforti said as he fought back tears. He said if it wasn't for his wife, who suggested they get up on a table to avoid the rising water, he wouldn't have made it: "I started to lose sensibility, because when the water's at your door and it's splashing on the door and you're seeing how fast it's moving, there's no way you're going to survive that."

River flooding posed a major challenge at times to rescue and supply delivery efforts. The Myakka River washed over a stretch of Interstate 75, forcing a traffic-snarling highway closure for a while. The key corridor links Tampa to the north with the hard-hit southwest Florida region that straddles Port Charlotte and Fort Myers. Later Saturday, state officials said, water levels had receded enough that I-75 could be fully reopened.

While rising waters in Florida's southwest rivers have crested or are near cresting, the levels aren't expected to drop significantly for days, said National Weather Service meteorologist Tyler Fleming in Tampa.

Elsewhere, South Carolina's Pawleys Island — a beach community roughly 75 miles (115 kilometers) up the coast from Charleston — was among the places hardest hit. Power remained knocked out to at least half of the island Saturday.

Eddie Wilder, who has been coming to Pawleys Island for more than six decades, said Friday's storm was "insane." He said waves as high as 25 feet (7.6 meters) washed away the local pier, an iconic landmark.

"We watched it hit the pier and saw the pier disappear," said Wilder, whose house 30 feet (9 meters) above the ocean stayed dry inside. "We watched it crumble and and watched it float by with an American flag."

The Pawleys pier was one of at least four along South Carolina's coast destroyed by battering winds and rain. Meanwhile, the intracoastal waterway was strewn with the remnants of several boat houses knocked off their pilings.

John Joseph, whose father built the family's beige beach house in 1962, said Saturday he was elated to return from Georgetown — which took a direct hit. He found his Pawleys Island home entirely intact.

"Thank God these walls are still here, and we feel very blessed that this is the worst thing," he said of sand that had swept under his home. "What happened in Florida — gosh, God bless us. If we'd had a Category 4, I wouldn't be here."

In North Carolina, the storm claimed four lives and mostly downed trees and power lines, leaving over 280,000 people statewide without power at one point Saturday morning, officials said. The outages were down sharply hours later, after crews worked to restore power.

	<p>Two of the North Carolina deaths were from storm-related vehicle crashes, while officials said a man drowned when his truck plunged into a swamp and another was killed by carbon monoxide poisoning from a generator in a garage.</p> <p>At Port Sanibel Marina in Fort Myers, charter boat captain Ryan Kane inspected damage to two boats Saturday. The storm surge pushed several boats and a dock onshore. He said the boat he owns was totaled so he couldn't use it to help rescue people. Now, he said, it would be a long time before he'd be chartering fishing clients again.</p> <p>"There's a hole in the hull. It took water in the motors. It took water in everything," he said, adding: "You know boats are supposed to be in the water, not in parking lots."</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Indonesia soccer stampede, riot kills 174
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/indonesia-police-say-127-people-killed-after-stampede-football-match-2022-10-02/
GIST	<p>MALANG, Indonesia, Oct 2 (Reuters) - At least 174 people were killed and 180 injured in a stampede and riot at a soccer match in Indonesia, officials said on Sunday, in one of the world's worst stadium disasters.</p> <p>When frustrated supporters of the losing home team invaded the pitch in Malang in the province of East Java late on Saturday, officers fired tear gas in an attempt to control the situation, triggering the stampede and cases of suffocation, East Java police chief Nico Afinta told reporters.</p> <p>"It had gotten anarchic. They started attacking officers, they damaged cars," Nico said, adding that the crush occurred when fans fled for an exit gate.</p> <p>Video footage from local news channels showed fans streaming onto the pitch after Arema FC lost 3-2 to Persebaya Surabaya around 10 p.m. (1500 GMT). Scuffles can be seen, with what appeared to be tear gas in the air.</p> <p>Images showed people who appeared to have lost consciousness being carried away by other fans.</p> <p>The head of one of the hospitals in the area treating patients told Metro TV that some of the victims had sustained brain injuries and that the fatalities included a five-year-old child.</p> <p>Indonesian President Joko Widodo said authorities must thoroughly evaluate security at matches, adding that he hoped this would be "the last soccer tragedy in the nation."</p> <p>Jokowi, as the president is known, ordered the Football Association of Indonesia to suspend all games in the Indonesian top league BRI Liga 1 until an investigation had been completed.</p> <p>TEAR GAS RULES, OVERCAPACITY</p> <p>World soccer's governing body FIFA specifies in its safety regulations that no firearms or "crowd control gas" should be carried or used by stewards or police.</p> <p>East Java police did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether they were aware of such regulations.</p> <p>FIFA has requested a report on the incident from Indonesia's PSSI football association, and a PSSI team has been sent to Malang to investigate, PSSI secretary general Yunus Nusi told reporters.</p> <p>Indonesia's human rights commission also plans to investigate security at the ground, including the use of tear gas, its commissioner told Reuters.</p>

"Many of our friends lost their lives because of the officers who dehumanised us," said Muhammad Rian Dwicahyono, 22, crying, as he nursed a broken arm at the local Kanjuruhan hospital. "Many lives have been wasted."

On Sunday mourners gathered outside the gates of the stadium to lay flowers for the victims.

Amnesty International Indonesia slammed the security measures, saying the "use of excessive force by the state ... to contain or control such crowds cannot be justified at all".

The country's chief security minister, Mahfud MD, said in an Instagram post that the stadium had been filled beyond its capacity. He said 42,000 tickets had been issued for a stadium that is only supposed to hold 38,000 people.

Many victims at Kanjuruhan hospital suffered from trauma, shortness of breath and a lack of oxygen due to the large number of people at the scene affected by tear gas, said paramedic Bobby Prabowo.

WORST IN HALF CENTURY

Financial aid would be given to the injured and the families of victims, East Java Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa told reporters.

There have been outbreaks of trouble at matches in Indonesia before, with strong rivalries between clubs sometimes leading to violence among supporters.

Indonesia's football scene has been blighted by hooliganism, heavy-handed policing and mismanagement, largely preventing the country of 275 million people who pack stadiums from harnessing its potential in the sport.

Zainudin Amali, Indonesia's sports minister, told KompasTV the ministry would re-evaluate safety at football matches, including considering not allowing spectators in stadiums.

The Malang stadium disaster appeared to be the deadliest since 1964, when 328 people were reported dead in a riot and crush when Peru hosted Argentina at the Estadio Nacional.

In an infamous 1989 British disaster, 96 Liverpool supporters were crushed to death when an overcrowded and fenced-in enclosure collapsed at the Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield.

Indonesia is scheduled to host the FIFA under-20 World Cup in May and June next year. They are also one of three countries bidding to stage next year's Asian Cup, the continent's equivalent of the Euros, after China pulled out as hosts.

The head of the Asian Football Confederation, Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa said in a statement he was "deeply shocked and saddened to hear such tragic news coming out of football-loving Indonesia", expressing condolences for the victims, their families and friends.

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HEADLINE	10/01 Terrifying bat virus next pandemic?
SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/terrifying-khоста-2-russian-bat-virus-could-spark-the-next-pandemic?ref=home
GIST	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic isn't over. In fact, it shows signs of lingering for, well, a long time.</p> <p>But even as politicians and health authorities struggle with how, if at all, to keep addressing the current pandemic, scientists are already anticipating the <i>next</i> one. They're scouring the planet for animal viruses that, like SARS-CoV-2, could leap to the human population and cause serious disease on a global scale.</p>

They just found one. And it's *nasty*.

In 2020, a team of Russian scientists collected a few horseshoe bats in Sochi National Park in southern Russia. The Russians identified, in those bats, a new virus they called Khosta-2. Behaviorally, the virus seemed to have a lot in common with SARS-CoV-2.

Two years later, a separate team—including scientists from Washington State University and Tulane University—tested Khosta-2 along with another newly-discovered Russian bat virus, hoping to determine whether they're capable of infecting people. And, if so, whether our antibodies stand any chance of stopping them.

The initial results, which the team described in [a new peer-reviewed study](#) that appeared last week in the science journal *PLOS Pathogens*, are worrying. The second bat virus didn't seem all that infectious. But Khosta-2, on the other hand, took a liking to human cells.

"We tested how well the spike proteins from these bat viruses infect human cells under different conditions," the scientists wrote. "We found that the spike from the virus Khosta-2 could infect [the] cells, similar to human pathogens using the same entry mechanisms."

Equally troubling, Khosta-2 proved "resistant to neutralization by serum from individuals who had been vaccinated for SARS-CoV-2." In other words, our bodies' defenses against COVID-19 might not protect us from a hypothetical disease caused by Khosta-2.

The implications are clear. We'd need better antibodies to beat Khosta-2. "Our findings highlight the urgent need to continue development of new, and broader-protecting ... vaccines," the scientists behind the new study wrote.

Like SARS-CoV-2 and the hundreds of other so-called sarbecoviruses, Khosta-2 uses that spike-shaped protein on its surface to grab onto and infect a host's cells. But the vast majority of sarbecoviruses can only infect the species that are their usual hosts. Bats, typically.

What makes Khosta-2 *special* is that, like SARS-CoV-2, it can also infect people—in lab conditions, at least. What makes Khosta-2 particularly scary is that it appears to shrug off the antibodies that currently work against SARS-CoV-2. Again, in lab conditions.

There's a lot of uncertainty here. The Tulane-Washington State University team didn't try to infect actual human beings with Khosta-2. To test infection, they exposed the Russian bat virus to human cell cultures. To test our potential for immunity, they exposed the virus to COVID antibodies. "We can only test what we can test," Michael Letko, a Washington State University virologist and one of the study's authors, told *The Daily Beast*.

But the immunity test in particular wasn't necessarily representative of how our immune systems actually work—something the study's authors readily admit. "The immune response in an individual will be multi-faceted, encompassing innate and adaptive responses and cell-mediated immunity," Letko said. "We only looked at antibody neutralization in this study."

So don't panic quite yet. There are a lot of animal viruses, many of which are closely related to SARS-CoV-2 or at least use some of the same biological mechanisms to infect their hosts. Most have never infected a human being—and might not even be able to do so in real-world conditions outside of a lab.

With further study, Khosta-2 could end up as a scientific red herring. A virus that looks a lot scarier than it actually is. "We have a hard time predicting accurately which ones will actually crack the code to become efficient human pathogens," James Lawler, an infectious disease expert at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, told *The Daily Beast*.

But there's no denying that, as the human population expands and chops down more and more forests for farms and cities, it's coming into close contact with more and more exotic animal species. Each encounter is an opportunity for an animal virus to infect people—a process scientists call zoonosis.

“Generally, we might be able to say zoonosis risk is increasing for many types of viruses,” Letko said. Consider the recent history of infectious diseases in the human population. SARS-CoV-2 is just the *latest* animal virus to leap to people, after the bird flu virus, SARS-CoV-1, MERS and others.

There's every reason to fear the pandemic *after* COVID-19. Maybe Khosta-2 will be the virus that gets us next. Maybe it'll be some other pathogen. “The more that we disrupt ecosystems and allow new mixing of species and viruses, the more we spin nature's roulette wheel,” Lawler said. We need to keep our eyes open—and prepare.

The most useful thing we can do, besides stop chopping down the forests where bats and their viruses live, is develop vaccines that work against a wide range of similar pathogens. There are several [universal coronavirus vaccines](#) in development that scientists hope will work against current and future variants of SARS-CoV-2.

The same “pan-coronavirus” vaccines might also work against sarbecoronaviruses such as Khosta-2, Letko said. We can't say for sure until we test them. But as COVID funding withers, intensive testing could slip farther and farther into the future.

And if these universal vaccines *don't* work against Khosta-2, we might need entirely new vax formulations, ones that are even more widely effective. Barton Haynes, an immunologist with Duke University's Human Vaccine Institute who is developing a new pan-coronavirus vaccine, told The Daily Beast the likeliest outcome would be a mix of separate jabs that, taken together, could offer broad protection against a whole host of sarbecoronaviruses.

In that case, we might have a race on our hands. Can we develop these brand-new vaccines faster than some new sarbecoronavirus—whether Khosta-2 or some as-yet-undiscovered cousin—goes zoonotic and makes the leap to the human species? And can we get enough people to actually *get* the vaccines in time?

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HEADLINE	10/01 Bolt Creek fire was 'human caused'
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/evacuations-lift-near-bolt-creek-fire-but-smoke-still-headed-to-seattle/
GIST	<p>Authorities lifted evacuation guidance near the Bolt Creek fire Saturday and said the blaze was human-caused. The fire continues to burn and is likely to cause hazy skies over Seattle throughout the weekend.</p> <p>The Bolt Creek fire started Sept. 10 just north of Skykomish. The fire is now a little more than 12,000 acres and 28% contained, according to the Department of Natural Resources.</p> <p>A team working with an investigator to find the cause of the fire “determined through evidence they acquired it was human-caused,” but has not released any more information, said Amanda Monthei, a spokesperson for the fire management team. It will likely take “a couple of weeks, if not months” for investigators to make an official determination of the cause.</p> <p>“We had suspicion it was human-caused earlier on because we didn't have lightning in the area when the fire started,” Monthei said.</p> <p>As of 8 a.m. Saturday, all evacuation guidance for the areas around the fire was lifted.</p> <p>“Residents in the area should remain vigilant,” said the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management. “Conditions could change quickly, and evacuations may again become necessary.”</p>

Seattle is likely to see hazy skies through the weekend as easterly winds push smoke from the fire toward the city.

But air quality should remain good or moderate throughout most of the region, according to the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency.

Closer to Highway 2, air quality could reach unhealthy levels for sensitive groups, the agency said. People who may be sensitive to the smoke include those with heart and lung disease, older people and children.

Wind patterns will continue “throughout the weekend and early next week, so we’ll probably see similar conditions for the next few days,” said Mary Butwin, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Seattle. Air quality is typically worse overnight as winds calm, then improves throughout the day, Butwin said.

Highway 2 reopened this week with a reduced 35 mph speed limit. The Washington State Patrol says it will “strictly” enforce that limit as crews continue to work in the area.

Beckler Road remains closed. Roads, trails and campgrounds in the area are still closed and a burn ban is in effect until “significant rain” falls, according to DNR.

The department says crews are working to contain the fire and make sure it stays north of Highway 2. However, little rain is expected and a “season ending event is not likely until later in the month of October.”

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HEADLINE	09/30 Inflation accelerated more than expected
SOURCE	https://www.cnbc.com/2022/09/30/pce-inflation-august-2022-inflation-accelerated-even-more-than-expected-in-august.html
GIST	<p>Inflation in August was stronger than expected despite the Federal Reserve’s efforts to bring down prices, according to data Friday that the central bank follows closely.</p> <p>The personal consumption expenditures price index excluding food and energy rose 0.6% for the month after being flat in July. That was faster than the 0.5% Dow Jones estimate and another indication that inflation is broadening.</p> <p>On a year-over-year basis, core PCE increased 4.9%, more than the 4.7% estimate and up from 4.7% the previous month.</p> <p>Including gas and energy, headline PCE increased 0.3% in August, compared with a decline of 0.1% in July. It rose even with a sharp decline in gas prices that took the cost at the pump well below the nominal record above \$5 a gallon earlier in the summer.</p> <p>The Fed generally favors core PCE as the broadest indicator of where prices are heading as it adjusts for consumer behavior. In the case of either core or headline, the data Friday from the Commerce Department shows inflation running well above the central bank’s 2% long-run target.</p> <p>Outside the inflation data, the numbers showed that income and spending continues to grow.</p> <p>Personal income rose 0.3% in August, the same as July and in line with the estimate. Spending rose 0.4% after declining 0.2% the month before, beating the 0.3% expectation. After-tax income increased just 0.1% after rising 0.5% the previous month, while inflation adjusted spending rose 0.1%.</p> <p>The inflation data reflected the shift in spending from goods back to services, which saw respective gains of 0.3% and 0.6% on the month. Food prices rose 0.8% while energy prices slid 5.5%. Housing and utilities prices were up 1% while health care rose 0.6%.</p>

	<p>Markets showed little reaction to the news, with stock futures pointing to a slightly higher open on Wall Street.</p> <p>The market, however, has been highly volatile as investors deal with the highest inflation since the early 1980s. To combat inflation, the Federal Reserve has enacted a series of interest rate increases this year totaling 3 percentage points, taking rates to their highest levels since early 2008.</p> <p>However, with data showing that the rate hikes have yet to work their way through to bringing down prices, Fed officials have remained vigilant about the need to keep tightening policy.</p> <p>Fed Chair Lael Brainard in a speech Friday morning cautioned against pulling back “prematurely,” saying rates will remain higher “for some time” until inflation is brought under control.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Recall: Brie, Camembert cheeses
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/01/us/listeria-outbreak-cheese-recall/index.html
GIST	<p>Old Europe Cheese, Inc., based in Benton Harbor, Michigan, is issuing a voluntary recall of its Brie and Camembert cheeses because of a possible outbreak of listeria, according to the US Food and Drug Administration.</p> <p>Affected cheeses were sold at about a dozen major retailers in the US and Mexico, the FDA said.</p> <p>Recalled products contain a best-buy date through December 14, 2022, and were distributed between August 1 and September 28, 2022.</p> <p>Retailers who likely sold the recalled cheeses include Albertsons, Safeway, Meijer, Harding’s, Shaw’s, Price Chopper, Market Basket, Raley’s, Save Mart, Giant Foods, Stop & Shop, Fresh Thyme, Lidl, Sprouts, Athenian Foods and Whole Foods, the company said.</p> <p>However, other retailers may have received the recalled products as well, and not all stores on the list may have actually received the cheeses in question.</p> <p>Additionally, the FDA press release said that some recalled products may have been repackaged into smaller containers by retailers and sold with different labeling and product information.</p> <p>Listeria monocytogenes is an organism “which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people and others with weakened immune systems,” the FDA said. It can cause high fever, headaches, stiffness, nausea and diarrhea. In pregnant woman, it can cause miscarriages and stillbirths.</p> <p>The FDA has linked six cases of listeria from 2017 to 2022 to a strain found in samples taken at Old Europe Cheese’s Michigan facility, though the company’s products were not previously linked to the cases.</p> <p>Cases were found in California, Georgia, Texas, Michigan, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Five of the six resulted in hospitalization; there have been no deaths reported, according to an investigation between the FDA, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local and state health officials.</p> <p>The FDA is advising consumers who may have purchased any of the products to discard them, as well as use extra vigilance in cleaning and sanitizing any surfaces that may have come into contact with the products. FDA also noted that listeria can survive in refrigerated environments.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 Cuba makes rare request US hurricane aid
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SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/cuba-makes-rare-request-for-u-s-aid-after-devastation-from-hurricane-ian-11664581112?mod=hp_trending_now_article_pos5
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON—The Biden administration has received a rare request from Cuba’s government to provide emergency assistance following the devastating impact of Hurricane Ian, according to communications reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.</p> <p>No exact amount was requested, and the U.S. was still trying to determine whether the government in Havana would supplement the request as it works to determine the extent of the damage, according to the email communications. The storm killed at least two people in Cuba and left the country without power.</p> <p>The request comes as Cuba’s longtime supporter Russia struggles with the war in Ukraine and international sanctions while Havana contends with its worst economic crisis in three decades.</p> <p>Relations between Washington and Havana, which deteriorated when former President Donald Trump rolled back the Obama administration’s rapprochement efforts and declared Cuba a state sponsor of terrorism, have improved slightly under the current administration. President Biden hasn’t taken any major steps to normalize relations, however, and has kept Cuba on the terrorism watch list.</p> <p>But earlier this year, the Biden administration said that it would remove the cap on dollar remittances that Americans may send to Cuba, reopen air travel to cities across the island, and restore travel by so-called educational groups, measures it said were intended as support for the Cuban people.</p> <p>The emails suggested that the U.S. continued to engage with Havana to determine how much assistance was needed, and the U.S. has assessed that Cuban authorities would place priority on hospitals, water pumping facilities, sanitation and other critical infrastructure if Washington were to provide aid.</p> <p>A State Department spokeswoman said the U.S. continues to communicate with the Cuban government regarding the evolving humanitarian and environmental consequences of both Hurricane Ian and an Aug. 5 fire in Matanzas.</p> <p>“We are evaluating ways in which we can continue to support the Cuban people, consistent with U.S. laws and regulations,” the spokeswoman said.</p> <p>The White House National Security Council declined to comment. The Cuban government didn’t immediately reply to a request seeking comment.</p> <p>“If Cuba asks for humanitarian aid and the U.S. gives it to them, that would be a real breakthrough,” says William LeoGrande, an expert on Cuba at American University in Washington.</p> <p>On other occasions when Cuba has suffered from hurricanes, the U.S. has offered humanitarian aid, but Cuba has turned it down. “Fidel’s position was that Cuba would not take charity from a country that had an economic blockade against it,” says Mr. LeoGrande, referring to the late former Cuban leader Fidel Castro. “He did not want to justify the embargo.”</p> <p>The Cuban request suggests that Russia, which has been a supporter of Cuba in past disasters, is in no shape to do so because of the war in Ukraine, Mr. LeoGrande said.</p> <p>When a fire in August at the port of Matanzas destroyed much of Cuba’s most important fuel terminal, Russia, Mexico and Venezuela stepped in to help Havana. At the time, the U.S. offered technical assistance. Cuba said it was thankful of the offer, but the U.S. said Cuba didn’t formally make any aid requests. The U.S. Agency for International Development ultimately provided the Cuban government with 43 sets of firefighting gear and is procuring additional gear to send.</p> <p>Cuba’s economy is laboring through its roughest stretch in three decades. People stand in long lines for hours seeking scarce basic foods. Many medicines are difficult to find, while power outages are common and extend for more than 14 hours.</p>

Aside from the Trump administration's tightening of the U.S. trade embargo, Cuba's once-thriving tourism industry was devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic and has yet to recover. Its economy has been hit hard by accelerating inflation as well as economic mismanagement.

Cuba's economic crisis worsened after the Matanzas fire destroyed much of the terminal and fuel storage tanks, dealing another blow to Cuba's frail power grid.

The economic crisis and increased political repression has pushed tens of thousands of Cubans to migrate to the U.S. In the current fiscal year through the end of August, nearly 200,000 Cuban migrants have been detained by U.S. officials after crossing the U.S.'s southern border.

After the islandwide blackout caused by Hurricane Ian, Cubans took to the streets in parts of Havana and elsewhere to protest the lack of power and to demand the resignation of President Miguel Díaz-Canel, according to videos shown on social media.

"Everybody is angry," said Camilo Condis, a self-employed Havana electrical contractor. "The worst thing is food, which is so difficult to get, and it rots when the power is out." Mr. Condis said he had no electric power or water pressure in his house.

Cuba fears a repetition of an unprecedented wave of protests in July 2021 that shook the government when tens of thousands of Cubans took to the streets in dozens of towns and cities throughout the island demanding freedom and the resignation of Mr. Díaz-Canel. The demonstrations were also sparked by extended blackouts and deteriorating economic conditions.

In the months following the protests, Cuba charged some 930 people with crimes linked to the demonstrations and imprisoned at least 675 people, some to terms as long as 25 years, according to Cubalex, a human rights organization which monitors the island.

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HEADLINE	10/01 US falls short donating Covid vaccine
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-covid-19-vaccine-donations-to-poor-countries-fall-short-of-target-11664618813?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1
GIST	<p>The U.S. has fallen far short of its own target of donating some 1.1 billion Covid-19 vaccines to developing countries by the end of September, as many recipient governments, particularly in Africa, wrestle with low demand for the shots and limited funding to distribute them.</p> <p>President Biden made the pledge last September at a virtual summit with other world leaders. At the time, many poor nations had been waiting for months to get Covid-19 shots to their most vulnerable citizens after limited early supplies were bought up by the U.S. and Europe, and India had blocked exports of doses produced by the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine maker. Hundreds of thousands of people died as the Alpha, Gamma and Delta variants swept across Africa, Asia and Latin America.</p> <p>At the summit, Mr. Biden also endorsed an international effort to vaccinate at least 70% of people in low- and middle-income countries against the coronavirus, calling the global fight against the pandemic "an all-hands-on-deck crisis."</p> <p>The U.S. has shipped around 614 million doses, most of them made by Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, to developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Some 10 million doses went to high-income countries, including Canada and South Korea.</p> <p>European Union countries have donated around 500 million doses so far, out of a goal of 700 million by mid-2022, a spokeswoman for the European Commission said.</p>

The donations, along with shots purchased by governments themselves and the World Health Organization-backed Covax program, contributed to significant advances in the international vaccination drive, with about 63% of the global population now fully vaccinated against Covid-19, according to Our World in Data, a project based at the University of Oxford. Some regions, including South America, where about 77% of the population is fully vaccinated, have surpassed the 68% vaccination rate in the U.S.

But many countries in Africa and low-income nations elsewhere have struggled to keep up. Only around 23% of Africans and 19% of people in low-income countries have received an initial full course of Covid-19 vaccines.

Vaccination rates are lowest in countries with conflicts and very poor infrastructure that made it difficult to get vaccines like the Pfizer shot, which needs to be stored at ultralow temperatures, into communities. In Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, just 2.2% and 5.1% of people, respectively, have received at least one dose.

A senior Biden administration official said the donations have helped save an estimated 20,000 lives, but that vaccine hesitancy and barriers to access in many developing countries have complicated the U.S. effort. Some countries, the official said, are also dealing with other public-health priorities, such as ramping up childhood vaccinations that lagged during the height of the pandemic.

Due to these challenges, the administration has amended its contract with Pfizer, which was for up to 1 billion doses, to 600 million doses, with the option to buy the rest of the contract's doses in the future, the official said.

Discussions are under way about how to use the savings from the amended contract, the official said. The White House declined to say what those savings amount to.

The official said that the administration had spent more than \$1.7 billion on the global effort to get shots into arms, but that more funding was needed to address vaccine hesitancy.

The White House had asked Congress for \$4 billion to support that effort, but Republicans have opposed granting more money, saying there hasn't been a full enough accounting of funds spent so far. Some also say there are other unspent Covid-19 funds that should be used up first.

The smaller number of donations globally is concerning because it means a greater burden on healthcare systems in countries that have fewer resources, the official said.

Most of the U.S. donations were funneled through Covax, which was set up in 2020 to provide free Covid-19 vaccines to 92 of the world's poorest countries. After spending much of 2021 pleading with vaccine makers and rich countries to make doses available, Covax is now working with donors and manufacturers to adapt shipments to limited demand for shots in recipient countries, a spokeswoman for the program said.

Public-health experts say there are multiple reasons for the low demand for Covid-19 shots in many African and low-income countries. Limited testing made it difficult to capture the real burden of the pandemic in most African countries, where for many people the economic impact of lockdowns weighed heavier than the disease itself.

By the time large numbers of vaccines arrived toward the end of 2021, around two thirds of Africans already had recovered from Covid-19, according to an analysis from the WHO. That, along with the emergence of the milder Omicron variant, helped limit hospitalizations and deaths from Covid-19 in 2022.

"Whenever there is delay [in accessing a vaccine or medicine], the focus and the urgency within members of the public shifts," said Ahmed Ogwell, acting director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

But medicines-access activists and people working on Covid-19 vaccinations in Africa also said governments and international donors did too little to communicate the need for vaccinations and counter misinformation. Civil-society groups that work with local communities on health education often struggled to get funding for outreach campaigns.

“You cannot just be shipping vaccines,” said Tian Johnson, co-chair of the African Union’s African Vaccine Delivery Alliance. “There needs to be a corresponding demand-creation strategy, because vaccines are not going to jump out of the fridge and jump into people’s arms by magic.”

Ritu Sharma, vice president at CARE USA, which has been supporting the Covid-19 response in around 60 developing countries, said after the early shortages there was too much focus on buying doses and not enough on helping countries roll out the vaccines.

“Because the doses were not going to be delivered with wraparound support, without helping front-line healthcare workers, without the transportation, without the cold chain, without all of the things that are needed, countries did not want to accept the vaccines,” she said.

Lumka Joni, a nurse in a public hospital in Queenstown, South Africa, where just 33% of the population is fully vaccinated, said the number of people coming in for Covid-19 shots has dwindled to almost nothing. “Sometimes we have to turn people away because you can’t open a vial for just one person,” she said, adding that those people are directed to other clinics that may already have an open vial.

In South Africa’s economic capital, Johannesburg, Sibusiso Vilakazi, who ekes out a living washing cars, said he didn’t see how getting a Covid-19 vaccine would better his circumstances. “I’m not sick,” he said, “and even those who got [the vaccine] thinking it will improve their chances of getting jobs, they are where they were before getting those vaccine certificates: jobless.”

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HEADLINE	10/01 Britain's financial disaster is a warning
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/britains-financial-disaster-is-a-warning-to-the-world-11664596851?mod=hp_trending_now_article_pos2
GIST	<p>A toxic mix of politics, inflation and higher interest rates is threatening the financial system in the U.K., sending a shock wave through global markets and providing a warning to governments everywhere of the dangers of the new economic era we are entering.</p> <p>A surprise tax cut by the new British government just over a week ago sparked investor concern about the country’s fiscal credibility and crashed both the pound and the market for U.K. government bonds, known as gilts.</p> <p>Superlatives are a dime a dozen in market reporting, but the ructions in the past week were truly extraordinary. As well as giant swings in the pound, the longest-dated gilts, which mature in 50 years, lost a third of their value in four days. They then leapt in value by more than a quarter in a day after emergency bond-buying by the Bank of England designed to prevent a cycle of forced selling by pension funds. For context, the previous biggest move down over four days had been half as big, and the biggest daily gain was 15%, both when pandemic lockdowns shut the economy.</p> <p>Such big moves had a direct impact on world markets, pushing up the dollar and Treasury yields and hitting stocks and commodity prices. The bear market took another leg down.</p> <p>London’s position as a major financial center and base for global investors, plus the sterling-dollar exchange rate’s role as the world’s third most-traded currency pair, often give it an outsize impact on global markets. But there’s also a bigger worry: Maybe the U.K. is the canary in the coal mine, giving advance warning of dangers that other developed markets face too.</p>

The dangers are threefold. In the short run, is the U.K. a special case, or just the first victim of the newly-awakened bond vigilantes (investors who punish spendthrift governments with higher borrowing costs)? In the long run, is the U.K. once again taking to an extreme an approach—loose fiscal policy, and so more inflationary pressure—that is set to become the new new normal?

Finally, the old saw has it that the Federal Reserve hikes rates until something breaks. The Fed's role in all this is that its shift to much higher rates helped the dollar to soar, hitting sterling and lifting global rates even before the tax-cut-driven selloff. Now something has broken, and maybe other things will fall over too.

To address the short-term issues, start with what went wrong. The trigger was the government's surprise unfunded tax cut, to the tune of about 1.8% of GDP a year, with the well-off benefiting the most. In the grand scheme of things it isn't that much. But the cut had such a big effect because of the broader background of soaring interest rates, high debt, dire communications and the erosion of the country's institutional credibility. Most of those issues apply, to a greater or lesser degree, across the developed world.

Interest rates are up almost everywhere, which has investors on edge. Borrowing to stimulate the economy when inflation is in double digits and the central bank is raising rates to try to slow things down puts monetary and fiscal policy at loggerheads, and means the Bank of England has to do even more. Europe has taken the approach of spending more, rather than taxing less, with its €750 billion (\$735 billion) Next Generation EU stimulus just getting underway.

The U.S. has moved away from fiscal support, after Senate opposition to President Joe Biden's Build Back Better plans and the inflation that resulted from last year's monster stimulus package. Part of the original plan ended up in the more fiscally balanced Inflation Reduction Act.

In Britain debt was already due to leap due to the expected £150 billion-or-so (\$167 billion) subsidy of energy costs for households and businesses, from a base of 95% of GDP last year. That was the largest subsidy of any country in Europe until Germany went even bigger on Thursday, amounting to 6.5% of U.K. GDP, according to Brussels-based think tank Bruegel. The markets weren't bothered by the subsidy though, because it is a one-off to offset the leap in energy prices due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine; the tax cuts and the associated loss of government income are meant to be permanent, hence the rush to sell.

Making the debt situation worse is the fact that Britain's having to borrow from foreigners, as it runs a gigantic current account deficit. It retains a key feature of developed markets, borrowing in its own currency. But the more it has to borrow, the lower the currency has to go, or the higher the interest rate has to go, or, this past week, both, to attract overseas lenders.

The communications around the tax cuts were truly awful. The government chose not to explain the impact on government finances, merely talking up its ambition to have higher growth, something it argued the tax cuts would help deliver. Economists, and investors, disagreed. Prime Minister Liz Truss stayed silent for days after the market's atrocious reaction, then tried to blame the plunge in U.K. assets on global factors. Denial of what every investor can see to be true is a poor strategy for winning hearts and minds.

The institution that would usually examine new tax and spending plans, the Office for Budget Responsibility, was sidelined, not being asked for the usual advance assessment.

Ms. Truss had spent much of the summer attacking the U.K. treasury's orthodox approach to economics—an approach that had reassured bond markets, but that she blamed for Britain's sluggish growth of the past decade. The head of the treasury was ousted as one of the government's first acts, a highly unusual move in Britain's nonpartisan civil service.

"First you have Brexit, then you had Boris [Johnson, the last prime minister], and then there was this idea of a return to normality" with Ms. Truss, said Richard Robb, co-founder of New York and London-based fund manager Christofferson Robb & Co. "And then: no, wait, it's not returning to normality."

Other countries struggle with some or all of these issues. But no other major economy has been so cavalier about what the markets want, and the U.K. gives other leaders an object lesson in why they should be careful. Britain may be the canary, but its wobble is a warning to other countries to treat the bond markets better.

The answer to the long-term question seems clearer: Yes, there will be more inflationary pressures everywhere in future. Britain was the exemplar of the post-2010 secular stagnation, when growth was slow in spite of very low interest rates. The U.K. took austerity further than other large countries as it cut spending to run a very tight fiscal policy, which the Bank of England attempted to offset with record-low interest rates to support the economy. Ms. Truss, who loves to model herself on tax-cutting former PM Margaret Thatcher, may end up as the exemplar of the opposite approach, as her unfunded tax cuts promise to loosen the purse strings for many years ahead—and bring much higher interest rates.

Until recently markets disagreed and priced in a future of very low global interest rates, after accounting for inflation, just as during the secular stagnation era that followed the 2008-09 recession. Inflationary pressures may be high, but were thought to be temporary. That has shifted in the past few months, with long-term real yields on U.S. Treasury inflation-protected securities soaring as investors bet that inflationary pressures will force central banks to keep rates higher for the foreseeable future.

Investors should care a lot. A return to what was once known as the “new normal” of superlow rates means big profits for holding Treasuries and growth stocks such as the big technology firms. A future of more inflationary pressure and higher rates promises to hurt Treasuries and growth stocks, with cash the most obvious winner and cheap “value” stocks doing well relative to the rest of the stock market.

The most apocalyptic risk is that Britain is merely the first major victim of higher rates. Previous Fed tightening cycles often created financial problems, most obviously the global financial crisis that began with the subprime implosion of 2007, but also repeated emerging-market crises, the blowup of hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management in 1998, and the implosion of the overnight borrowing market in September 2019. When easy money goes away, bad things happen.

How bad? It is always hard to predict, since we don’t know what hidden risks we don’t know. The banks are in much better shape than in 2007, but the Bank of England just had to step in to prevent problems in fully-hedged pension funds, a deeply dull sector few would have expected to implode.

As often happens, it was problems in an area regarded as safe that caused difficulties. A pension-fund strategy designed to cushion the impact of interest-rate movements faltered as rates surged and bond prices fell, driving prices still lower.

“It brings back the unknown unknowns,” said Goldman Sachs Chief Economist Jan Hatzius. “There could be other things out there along those lines. That’s definitely an issue.”

Larry Summers, former Treasury Secretary and a Harvard professor, says there are parallels to 2007, when the subprime mortgage crisis began.

“When there are tremors there aren’t always earthquakes, but there aren’t earthquakes without tremors,” he said. “And there are certainly tremors.”

Maybe there will be no more seismic events, and Britain’s problems will turn out to be nothing more than a small earthquake, not many hurt. Nowhere else has the exact problems Britain has, and nowhere else have politicians been so willing to risk the wrath of the markets. I don’t expect anything on the scale of the financial crisis to hit. But times are hard, the dangers are mounting, and it would surprise me if we came through the next couple of years without at least a few more minor crises, and probably more central bank rescues.

HEADLINE	10/01 UK hospitals confront new Covid surge
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/01/latest-covid-surge-a-heavy-straw-on-camels-back-for-every-hospital-in-uk
GIST	<p>Every hospital in the UK is under significant pressure and a new Covid surge is “a very heavy straw on the camel’s back”, health leaders have warned.</p> <p>At least eight hospitals declared a critical incident, cancelled operations or asked people not to come to A&E unless they were seriously ill last week. One of Britain’s most senior emergency doctor said there were links between incidents like these and the rapid rise in hospitalisations for Covid, up nearly 37% in a week to 7,024. While the Office for National Statistics said it was too early to say if an autumn Covid wave had begun, health leaders said ministers need to urgently address staffing shortages.</p> <p>Dr Adrian Boyle, the incoming president of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine told the Observer: “Our system is under-resourced. We don’t have enough beds, and we don’t have the workforce for the demand that we’re being asked to deal with.</p> <p>“Covid just makes everything that much harder and it’s entirely valid to link this with critical incidents being called around the country. All hospitals are feeling significant levels of pressure at the moment. Covid is a very heavy straw on the camel’s back.”</p> <p>The first signs of an increase in Covid infections came in southwest England. Last Friday, NHS Devon warned people of “longer than usual waits” in emergency departments. NHS Devon’s chief nurse Darryn Allcorn said people who came to A&E without a life-threatening emergency “may be directed to a more appropriate service”.</p> <p>Hospital trusts in the Midlands and north have all announced they were struggling to cope with demand. Nottingham University Hospitals Trust declared a critical incident, postponing some operations due to extreme pressures, and by Friday the alert was expanded to cover the whole of Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>In neighbouring Lincolnshire, routine operations at the Diana, Princess of Wales hospital in Grimsby were cancelled, with Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Trust saying there had been a significant increase in people attending A&E.</p> <p>Royal Liverpool hospital said it had very limited space in emergency departments and St George’s hospital in London asked people to go to A&E only in serious situations.</p> <p>Boyle, who takes up his position this week, said the first sticking-plaster should be applied to social care. “We need to use what beds we have as efficiently as possible. That means sorting out social care, so people aren’t kept in hospital waiting to leave.”</p> <p>The spectre of a “twindemic” of flu and Covid means that winter “could become very grim,” he said – “like two playground bullies getting together and forming a gang”. “What’s happening with urgent and emergency care, particularly ambulance handovers and long waits in emergency departments – this needs to become a political priority. We need leadership and we need grip and investment.”</p> <p>Last week, research by the Nuffield Trust revealed that record numbers of nurses were quitting the NHS, with one in nine leaving their jobs.</p> <p>Pat Cullen, the general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, said that an increase in Covid infections and hospitalisations “should be a cause for concern”, and called for nurses to get access to the highest quality PPE.</p> <p>“As we head into winter it is important that healthcare leaders remain vigilant and stand ready to act to prevent any further spread of the virus. We all saw what happened last winter and nobody wants to take a backwards step.”</p>

Saffron Cordery, interim chief executive of NHS Providers, said trusts had become more adept at dealing with Covid by, for example, setting up “hot” and “cold” sites.

“But we need to be clear that we’re back at levels with the R rate over one in lots of places. We need to think about the impact not just on patients but also on staff, and what it means for them to be going through this yet again. With a twindemic this winter, we’re going to see a spike in demand and more staff are going to be absent.”

She said Thérèse Coffey, the health secretary, should be focusing on vaccinations and supporting the NHS workforce.

Dr Veena Raleigh, senior fellow, The King’s Fund said Covid was the sixth leading cause of death, with more than 300 people dying each week.

“[That is] a stark reminder that this virus remains a threat for the foreseeable future,” she said. “Although it is early days, this rise in cases is consistent with what’s been expected as winter approaches. Acting now to prevent further hospitalisations and deaths is crucial.”

People at higher risk of Covid should get vaccinated as soon as possible, Raleigh said. “This is especially important for people from deprived and ethnic minority communities, given the disproportionately brutal impact Covid-19 has had on them.” Mask-wearing on public transport and in crowded places would also help, she added.

“Since spring this year, overall deaths have been significantly higher than expected compared with previous years, in part due to Covid-19 deaths. There’s a real risk that the toll of excess deaths could mount. The NHS was over-stretched even during the summer months when demand for health care is normally lower, and winter will bring added pressures. We therefore urge the Government to address the longstanding staffing and funding deficits in NHS and social care services that pre-date the pandemic and continue to limit the ability to meet patients’ needs.”

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HEADLINE	10/01 Iranian civil rights protests spread
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/01/women-life-liberty-iranian-civil-rights-protests-spread-worldwide
GIST	<p>Worldwide protests were being held on Saturday in solidarity with the growing uprising in Iran demanding greater freedom and protesting against the death of Mahsa Amini following her arrest by Iranian morality police.</p> <p>Demonstrations under the slogan “Women, life, liberty” took place in many major cities, including Auckland, London, Melbourne, New York, Paris, Rome, Seoul, Stockholm, Sydney and Zurich.</p> <p>Efforts were also under way inside Iran on Saturday to launch a national strike, mainly in the country’s Kurdish cities, as well as to promote the non-payment of taxes to the government.</p> <p>Public anger flared after Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman, died in custody on 16 September, three days after her arrest for allegedly breaching Iran’s strict rules for women on wearing hijab headscarves and modest clothing.</p> <p>After probably the single most violent incident of the protests, security officials were claiming security had been restored in the city of Zahedan, in eastern Iran’s Sistan and Baluchistan province, where the police had fired on civilians during Friday prayers.</p> <p>As many as 40 people were reported dead after protests were sparked by stories that a policeman had raped a woman.</p>

Local hospitals were inundated with wounded people and a police station was torched in rioting that continued overnight.

The commander of the local intelligence unit of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was killed, official Iranian government sources confirmed.

Videos on social media showed burnt out fire engines, bus stations and banks. The government claimed the riots, including shots fired from the crowd, were orchestrated by terrorist groups, but the protesters said the police were firing into crowds at prayer.

What will concern the government is if the disparate and apparently leaderless protests, revealing a cultural chasm inside Iran, start to coalesce into a nationwide movement across classes with specific goals.

The Iranian state, however, has infinite tools for repression of dissent, complete control of the media, including TV, and a track record of being able eventually to suppress protest even at the cost of much human life.

The intelligence services issued a lengthy statement on Friday blaming the protest on foreign agents and terrorists. They highlighted that 85 ambulances had been attacked, and hardline MPs continued to denounce the protesters.

Student groups claimed that in more than 110 universities, faculties and educational centres went on strike and held a student sit-in in protest against the suppression of street protests following the loss of life.

Social media showed protests in campuses across the country. More than 100 university professors have signed a statement demanding the release from detention of their students, adding: "Everyone should appreciate the existence of students who are ready to sacrifice themselves and pay the price to defend freedom, justice and human dignity."

Earlier, the Cooperation Center of the Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties had called for a nationwide strike, urging support for young Iranians demanding freedom and oppression of women inside Iran.

The strike call was being honoured in large parts of Kurdistan, with reports of police shootings in some major towns such as Dehghan close to the border with Iraq.

In the south there were protests at the strategic port of Bandar Abbas.

From house arrest, the reformist politician and former Iranian prime minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi sent out a message urging the security forces to side with the people.

He said: "Armed forces! The powers vested in you are for defence of the people, not their repression; for protection of the oppressed, not service to the powerful and mighty.

"The hope is that you will stand on the side of truth and the nation. Your duty is secure the peace for the millions and especially the downtrodden, and not to consolidate the power of oblivious officials."

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HEADLINE	09/30 Ukraine applies for NATO membership
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/30/ukraine-applies-for-nato-membership-after-russia-annexes-territory
GIST	A defiant Volodymyr Zelenskyy has announced that Ukraine is officially applying for membership of Nato, hours after Vladimir Putin said in a Kremlin ceremony that he was annexing four Ukrainian provinces.

In a speech filmed outside his presidential office in Kyiv, Zelenskiy said he was taking this “decisive step” in order to protect “the entire community” of Ukrainians. He promised the application would happen in an “expedited manner”.

“De facto, we have already made our way to Nato. De facto, we have already proven compatibility with alliance standards. They are real for Ukraine – real on the battlefield and in all aspects of our interaction,” he said. “We trust each other, we help each other, and we protect each other. This is the alliance. De facto. Today, Ukraine is applying to make it de jure.”

The president signed the application form, as did the speaker of parliament, Ruslan Stefanchuk, and the prime minister, Denys Shmyhal.

The alliance is unlikely to accept Ukraine’s imminent Nato entry while it is in a state of war. As a Nato member, fellow members would be compelled to actively defend it against Russia – a commitment that goes well beyond the supply of weapons.

Zelenskiy acknowledged this soon after Russia’s full-scale invasion. “It is clear that Ukraine is not a member of Nato, we understand this,” he said in March. “For years we heard about the apparently open door, but have already also heard that we will not enter there, and these are truths and must be acknowledged.”

In his address on Friday, shared on Telegram, Zelenskiy dismissed the ceremony in Moscow as a meaningless “farce”. He said no peace talks with Russia would be possible while Putin was president. “Putin doesn’t know what dignity and honesty is. We are ready for dialogue with Russia but only with a different Russian president,” he said.

Zelenskiy promised that Ukraine’s armed forces would continue to free territory from Russian occupation, regardless of Putin’s insinuation that Moscow might use nuclear weapons to defend land it has seized. “The whole of Ukraine will be liberated from this enemy,” he said. Moscow was against “life, the law, humanity and truth”, he added.

The president’s office let it be known that they did not watch Putin’s speech. Instead, Zelenskiy convened his national security council and met the commander-in-chief of his armed forces, Gen Valeriy Zaluzhnyi. He said they discussed progress on the battlefield and weapons deliveries. Zelenskiy added: “Everything will be Ukraine.”

Zelenskiy said Putin’s willingness to kill and torture in order to expand his “zone of control” was madness. Ukrainian commentators agreed. They dismissed Russia’s president as delusional and said his new “treaty” incorporating four regions of Ukraine into Russia would make no difference to the situation on the ground, where Ukrainian troops are on the brink of securing a major victory.

The Ukrainian MP Oleksiy Honcharenko described Putin as an “insane, inadequate person” and said Russia under his two-decade leadership had become a “constant danger to the world”. The ceremony inside the Kremlin’s St George’s Hall was full of “strange people” who “look absolutely awful”, he said.

Speaking to the BBC, he pointed out that the four supposed leaders of the provinces formally annexed by Russia – Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson – had no democratic mandate. “Who elected these people? Who are they?” he said, describing them as puppets.

The prominent defence correspondent for the Kyiv Independent newspaper, Illia Ponomarenko, called Putin “absolutely mad”. He said the speech was the “most imperialistic” since Adolf Hitler. The Kyiv Post tweeted a question of the day asking: “On scale from 1,000 to 1,001, how mentally deranged is he?”

Zelenskiy has made clear that annexation means negotiations with the Kremlin are at an end. His senior aides pointed to the fact that as Putin was speaking, thousands of his troops faced annihilation in the city of Lyman, in the Donetsk region – an area Moscow says is Russia’s “for ever”.

Zelenskiy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, tweeted a picture of a cauldron, a reference to the fact Russian soldiers were apparently trapped in Lyman. Another senior aide, Mykhailo Podolyak, said Moscow would have to ask Kyiv for their safe exit. He added: "If, of course, those in Kremlin are concerned with their soldiers."

The Russian army is facing embarrassing military defeat and the possible collapse of its northern front in the Donetsk and Luhansk region. Unconfirmed video suggested Ukrainian forces had entered the outskirts of Lyman. It showed destroyed Russian vehicles and dead soldiers by the side of the road.

The city, which is a strategic railway junction, had been under Moscow's control since May. About 5,000 Russian fighters were reportedly trapped in the city. They included troops from Russia's 20th Combined Arms Army, as well as fighters from the so-called Luhansk People's Republic.

A Ukrainian journalist, Yuriy Butusov, posted drone footage that appeared to show a Russian military column and stolen civilian vehicles trying to break out in the village of Zarichne. They were attempting to escape before darkness set in, he wrote on Facebook, and the route out was completely closed off.

Earlier this month, Ukraine's armed forces launched a surprise counter-offensive in the Kharkiv region, liberating an area half the size of Wales. They have since consolidated their positions around the city of Kupiansk and have crossed over to the east bank of the Oskil River.

In recent days, Ukrainian battalions have pushed forward north of Lyman, while at the same time advancing from the south-east towards Yampil. Ukraine's armed forces said on Friday they had liberated the town. They are now able to fire on a highway connecting Lyman with the village of Torskoye – with a wipeout of fleeing Russians possible.

The surrender of Russia's garrison in Lyman would be a humiliation for the Kremlin. Officials in Kyiv believe Putin's hasty moves to annex Ukrainian land, including territory under Ukrainian government control, is a sign of desperation and weakness. On the battlefield, Russian troops appear to be going backwards.

Ukraine's army released video of what appeared to be Russian soldiers fleeing across a wood in the Lyman region. In ironic tones, it said they were involved in a "tactical regrouping" – the phrase used by the general staff in Moscow to describe the Russian army's chaotic abandonment of Kharkiv oblast.

It now seems likely that Ukrainian units will be able to make further territorial gains in the north of Luhansk province. The next obvious target is the city of Svatove, captured by Russian forces in March, soon after Putin began his "special military operation" in Ukraine.

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HEADLINE	10/01 Day 220 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/01/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-220-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vladimir Putin has signed "accession treaties" formalising Russia's illegal annexation of four occupied regions in Ukraine – Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk and Donetsk – marking the largest forcible takeover of territory in Europe since the second world war. After signing the treaties, the Russian-installed heads of the four regions gathered around Putin, linking hands and joining chants of "Russia! Russia!" with the applauding audience.• Putin later addressed crowds in Moscow's Red Square, where he vowed to "do everything" to "raise the level of security" in Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk and Donetsk. Speaking at a televised patriotic pop concert, the Russian leader said people in the regions had made a choice to rejoin their "historic motherland". "Welcome home!" he said to the flag-waving crowd.• In a firm rebuttal to Putin's ceremony in Moscow, Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, announced in a video address in Kyiv that his country was formally applying for

	<p>fast-track membership of the Nato alliance. Zelenskiy accused Russia of brazenly rewriting history and redrawing borders “using murder, blackmail, mistreatment and lies”, adding that Ukraine would not hold any peace talks with Russia as long as Putin was president.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kremlin said again on Friday that it would consider attacks against any part of its claimed regions of Ukraine – Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson – as acts of aggression against Russia itself. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters Russia would “de jure” incorporate parts of Ukraine which are not under the control of Russian forces. Of the four regions, Luhansk and Kherson are the only territories that Russia is close to having total control over. • Nato secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, accused Vladimir Putin of provoking “the most serious escalation” of the war in Ukraine since it began with his latest actions. Russia’s move was “the largest attempted annexation of European territory by force since the second world war”, Stoltenberg said, adding that Nato reaffirmed its “unwavering support” for Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. • Dozens of people were killed after Russian forces launched a missile attack on a civilian convoy near the city of Zaporizhzhia, hours before Putin’s signing ceremony. The attack on Friday morning hit people waiting in cars in Zaporizhzhia city to cross into Russian-occupied territory so they could bring family members back across the frontlines. • Putin has signed a decree on routine autumn conscription, the Kyiv Independent reports. According to the outlet, Russia’s defence ministry “reportedly claims that the decision is ‘not in any way related’” to Russia’s war in Ukraine. • A large number of Russian forces in the strategic Donbas town of Lyman were reported to have been surrounded in the latest setback for Putin. Ukrainian and Russian military bloggers said that Russian forces together with local “Luhansk People’s Republic” fighters were encircled in the city of Lyman. The town – a strategic railway junction – has been under Moscow’s control since May. The surrender of Russia’s garrison in Lyman would be a humiliation for the Kremlin, at a time when it is claiming that the entire Donetsk region including areas under Ukrainian government control is a part of Russia “forever”. • In response to Putin’s annexation of Ukrainian territories, the US announced fresh Russia-related sanctions on hundreds of individuals and companies. More than 1,000 people and firms connected to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine are included in the new sanctions package, including its Central Bank governor and families of national security council members. • The US Congress also approved \$12.3bn in aid on Friday to Ukraine. The package includes \$3bn for arms, supplies and salaries for Ukraine’s military and authorises president Joe Biden to direct the Pentagon to transfer \$3.7bn in weapons and other hardware to Ukraine. • Russia on Friday vetoed a western bid at the UN security council to condemn its annexations of Ukrainian territory. • The US has not to date seen Russia take any action that suggests it is contemplating the use of nuclear weapons, according to the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken. He reiterated that the US takes Vladimir Putin’s nuclear sabre-rattling “very seriously” and said the US plans for “every possible scenario, including this one”. • The UK is also stepping up sanctions against Russia after the “illegal” annexation of four areas of Ukraine, foreign secretary James Cleverly announced. The measures will restrict Russia’s access to key British commercial and transactional services, as well as ban the export to Russia of almost 700 goods that are critical to manufacturing production, the Foreign Office said.
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HEADLINE	09/30 Russia is a country in turmoil
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/30/russia-ukraine-regions-annexation-putin-red-square-rally-turmoil
GIST	A tide of Russians flowed toward Red Square as Vladimir Putin declared his annexation of Ukrainian territory that would herald a shining new era of perpetual war with Ukraine and the west. “Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Russia! Together for ever!” read the banner hanging on Manezh Square by the Kremlin.

There were busloads of tough men from a factory near Moscow alighting by the statue of Karl Marx to celebrate, university teachers passing out invitations to a pop concert to their students, workers lugging armfuls of Russian flags to distribute. Some of the tricolours bore the image of Putin.

This is the Russia that Putin envisions after 22 years in power: united, simple, cynical and slavish. But real life is not a staged rally. And as Putin gathered his lackeys and satraps in the gilded Grand Kremlin Palace, across the country, from the minority ethnic republics of Dagestan and Buryatia to the hinterlands of Pskov and Penza, to cosmopolitan Moscow, communities are in turmoil.

Hundreds of thousands of men are leaving their homes, some contracted and mobilised into fighting in [Ukraine](#), and still more fleeing for the borders to dodge the draft. In both cases, they do not know when they will come home.

Tensions have not been as high as they are now in Russia for decades, according to a new poll from the state-run Public Opinion Foundation. Of those surveyed by the centre this week, 69% said they had felt “stress”, nearly double the 35% who told the pollster they felt tense before Putin announced his mobilisation.

“I feel we are going into the unknown, going into nowhere,” said Anton, a Moscow resident who had passed into Georgia after waiting more than three days on the border. He described men desperate to reach the border before Putin spoke on Friday, with fears that the annexations would set off a tit-for-tat response with the west leading to a potential border closure.

At the same time, videos have shown Russian men called up to the army arriving at trash-strewn barracks with no officers, or simply dumped in snowy fields with no tents or instructions. “Nobody needs us,” said one man in a video posted from a field near Berezniki, in the Ural mountains. “They’ve driven us here like a herd of sheep.”

These scenes are nothing compared with the horrors of war that Ukrainians have endured at Russian hands over the last seven months. But they are new and shocking for Russians who have tried to ignore the war and now cannot. Polling shows that Putin’s mobilisation is having a more acute effect on Russian society – and perhaps on his hold on power – than any event since February.

The mobilisation has played out as a tragicomedy. In Tuva, southern Siberia, the authorities will give your family a sheep if you sign up for military service, the independent media outlet Holod reported. In Dagestan’s Derbent region, police with loudspeakers drove through residential neighbourhoods telling all draft-age men to leave their homes and go to local draft centres. “Fucking idiots!” raged the head of Dagestan, Sergei Melikov, in response, in a video circulating on social media, as the backlash to the draft and attempts to mollify the public reached fever pitch.

At the root of reactions is deep unease at the nuclear standoff that the Russian president is leading the country into. As soon as the Kremlin event was announced, state TV began broadcasting a 24-hour countdown to Putin’s speech. By the time the signing ceremony began in the Grand Kremlin Palace, even some of Putin’s most loyal supporters looked tense.

“Is everyone ready to follow Putin into heaven?” asked Tatiana Stanovaya, the founder of the political analysis firm R.Politik. “Putin is basically proposing to the world that if the west doesn’t give us Ukraine, then there’s going to be a nuclear war. Is the Russian elite to support Putin until the end in this bet? I have great doubts about that.”

The most enthusiastic are also suspect. “We’ll conquer everyone, we’ll kill everyone, we’ll loot whoever we need to, and everything will be just as we like it,” said Vladlen Tatarsky, a Vostok battalion fighter and pro-Kremlin blogger, who was in the audience for Putin’s speech, in a video blog.

On Nikolskaya Street, most were preoccupied with just making an appearance at the concert. One teacher photographed each of his students holding up their invitations as they entered the event. A group of

women fretted about the weather and the traffic that would delay them coming and going. “Let’s wait until it starts to go in,” one said.

It was a very different scene to the one eight years ago, when Russia annexed Crimea and Putin rode a wave of political euphoria that buoyed his support and fractured his critics. The opposition never recovered.

And it was a world away from the picture in 2018, when world flags were hoisted on these streets by revellers during the World Cup – a triumph for Russia considering it had fomented war in Ukraine just four years earlier.

Now Russia has new symbols. In front of the storied Bolshoi theatre, men walked by in hats bearing Zs, a tactical sign adopted as a pro-war symbol. They carried flags of the Donetsk People’s Republic and Novorossiia, invented polities that the Kremlin claims are real. An American in attendance wore a motorcycle jacket with an image of Stalin and Putin superimposed over the 1945 storming of the Reichstag.

In Red Square, the concert began. The pop diva Alla Pugacheva, a Russian icon for decades, had fled the country with her children days ago. Instead, there were Oleg Gazmanov and Grigory Leps, loyal artists for the pro-Kremlin masses.

Hours before the signing, the Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said he needed to confirm the borders of the territories that Russia was claiming to annex on Friday.

“This is truly a historic day,” said a male MC addressing the crowd at the concert. “We still need to grasp what has happened today. Understand it and endure it. But look at how together we all are.”

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HEADLINE	10/01 Violent anti-govt protests in Baghdad
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/01/scores-of-iraqis-injured-in-anti-government-protests-in-baghdad
GIST	<p>Iraqi security forces have fired teargas and stun grenades to disperse stone-throwing protesters in clashes that wounded scores of people near Baghdad’s Tahrir Square, where hundreds marked the anniversary of anti-government unrest in 2019.</p> <p>At least 86 people were wounded on Saturday, about half of them members of the security forces, and 38 protesters were hit by rubber bullets.</p> <p>“Infiltrated elements” were attacking security forces with molotov cocktails and hunting rifles, Iraq’s military said.</p> <p>Security personnel had deployed checkpoints across the city, closed bridges and squares, and erected walls across some of the bridges leading to the fortified Green Zone that houses government headquarters and foreign embassies.</p> <p>Protesters in the square waved the Iraqi flag and chanted: “We want to overthrow the regime.”</p> <p>“We took part in today’s peaceful protests because we want our demands to be met ... we want security, jobs and our simple rights ... we are not here to fight or shed blood,” said Laith, a young protester from Baghdad.</p> <p>A few metres away, a Reuters reporter witnessed security forces firing teargas and stun grenades to disperse protesters who had tried to tear down a wall blocking the Republic Bridge leading across the Tigris to the Green Zone.</p>

Protests also erupted in southern provinces. In the city of Nasiriya, hundreds gathered in the central Haboubi Square and many marched towards the provincial building and threw molotov cocktails.

In Diwaniya and Basra, protesters gathered in front of the provincial government building and burned tyres.

In 2019 protests erupted against then prime minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi's government, with demonstrators demanding an overhaul of a political system they saw as profoundly corrupt and keeping most Iraqis in poverty.

More than 560 people, mostly unarmed demonstrators but also members of the security forces, were killed as Iraqi security forces and unidentified gunmen cracked down.

Mahdi quit under pressure from the protests, with the powerful Shia Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr the biggest winner in an election last October.

In June Sadr withdrew all his lawmakers, nearly a quarter of parliament, and resorted to whipping up street protests after his movement failed to form a government, leading to some of the worst clashes the country has seen in years.

"Not this government and neither the previous one. We are against the political system in its entirety. We want drastic change. It is enough," daily wage worker Yasser said.

Saturday's gathering raised fears of more unrest and tension among power-hungry politicians that could further delay the formation of a government after Sadr quit politics at the end of August.

Four rockets landed in the Green Zone on Wednesday during a partial lockdown as parliament was convening, wounding seven security personnel, and another four rockets fired from eastern Baghdad landed around the zone on Thursday.

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HEADLINE	09/30 Widespread monkeypox elimination unlikely
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/30/some-officials-now-say-monkeypox-elimination-unlik/
GIST	<p>NEW YORK — Some U.S. health officials are conceding that monkeypox is probably not going away anytime soon.</p> <p>The disease's spread is slowing but the virus is so widespread that elimination is unlikely, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. That conclusion was in a recent CDC report, and echoed Friday by Marc Lipsitch, director of science in the agency's disease-forecasting center.</p> <p>Lipsitch hesitated to say monkeypox is permanently here to stay, but he said it stands to be a continuing threat for the next few years.</p> <p>"It's in many geographic locations within the country" as well as in other countries, Lipsitch told The Associated Press. "There's no clear path in our mind to complete elimination domestically."</p> <p>The virus has mainly spread among gay and bisexual men, though health officials continue to stress that anyone can be infected. It's important that people at risk take steps to prevent spread and that vaccination efforts continue, Lipsitch said.</p> <p>The CDC report contained some good news: The U.S. outbreak seems to have peaked in early August. The average number of daily cases being reported - fewer than 150 - is about a third what it was reported in the middle of the summer, and officials expect the decline will continue for at least the next several weeks.</p>

Lipsitch attributed the good news to increasing vaccinations, cautious behavior by people at risk and infection-derived immunity in the highest risk populations.

Dr. Tom Inglesby, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, agreed that it's unlikely that spread of monkeypox will stop in the U.S. anytime soon, but he said it's still possible in the long term.

If domestic transmission were stopped, infections may still continue if people catch the virus while traveling internationally, he said. But the declining cases makes it seem like "we've turned a real corner."

"The efforts underway are succeeding, and should be continued, if not intensified," he said.

With case numbers going down, this is a good time for local health departments to take a new stab at doing intensive contact tracing to try to stop chains of transmission, he said.

Monkeypox is endemic in parts of Africa, where people have been infected through bites from rodents or small animals, but it wasn't considered a disease that spreads easily among people until May, when infections emerged in Europe and the U.S.

There have been more than 67,000 cases reported in countries that have not historically seen monkeypox. The U.S. has the most infections of any country - more than 25,600. One U.S. death has been attributed to monkeypox.

More than 97% of U.S. cases are men. The vast majority have been men who reported recent sexual contact with other men.

Though cases have been declining, the proportion of new cases that have information about recent sexual contact is also down, officials said. That's causing a growing blind spot about how the virus may be spreading, Lipsitch noted.

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HEADLINE	10/01 Army misses recruiting goal: 25% short
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/1/us-army-misses-recruiting-goal-other-services-sque/
GIST	<p>The Army fell about 15,000 soldiers - or 25% - short of its recruitment goal this year, officials confirmed Friday, despite a frantic effort to make up the widely expected gap in a year when all the military services struggled in a tight jobs market to find young people willing and fit to enlist.</p> <p>While the Army was the only service that didn't meet its target, all of the others had to dig deep into their pools of delayed entry applicants, which will put them behind as they begin the next recruiting year on Saturday.</p> <p>The worsening problem stirs debate about whether America's fighting force should be restructured or reduced in size if the services can't recruit enough, and could also put added pressure on the National Guard and Reserve to help meet mission requirements.</p> <p>According to officials, the Marine Corps, which usually goes into each fiscal year with as much as 50% of its recruiting goal already locked in, has only a bit more than 30%. And the Air Force and the Navy will only have about 10% of their goals as they start the new fiscal year. The Air Force usually has about 25%. Officials spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details on the recruiting totals that have not yet been released.</p> <p>"In the Army's most challenging recruiting year since the start of the all-volunteer force, we will only achieve 75% of our fiscal year 22 recruiting goal," Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said in a statement to The Associated Press. "The Army will maintain its readiness and meet all our national security requirements. If recruiting challenges persist, we will draw on the Guard and Reserve to augment active-duty forces, and may need to trim our force structure."</p>

Officials said the Army brought in about 45,000 soldiers during the fiscal year that ended Friday. The goal was 60,000.

The Air Force, meanwhile, was able to pull enough recruits from its delayed entry pool to exactly meet its goal to bring in 26,151 recruits this year.

“Using Air Force lexicon, I would say we’re doing a dead stick landing as we come into the end of fiscal ‘22, and we’re going to need to turn around on the first of October and do an afterburner takeoff,” Maj. Gen. Edward Thomas, head of the Air Force Recruiting Service, said at a conference last week. “We’re going to be starting 2023 in a tougher position than we started 2022.”

Military leaders used increased enlistment bonuses and other programs to try and build their numbers this year, but they say it’s getting more and more difficult to compete with private industry in the tight labor market. And as they look to the future, they worry that if the declining enlistment trends continue, the Pentagon may have to reassess its force requirements and find ways to make the military a more attractive profession to the eroding number of young Americans who can meet mental and physical requirements for service.

Early this year, military leaders were already braced for a bad recruiting season. The Army, for example, announced several months ago that it would have to adjust the expected size of its total force this year from 476,000 to about 466,000. The large recruiting shortfall was offset a bit by the Army’s ability to exceed its retention goal - keeping 104% of the targeted number of troops in the service.

The causes for the recruiting struggles are many and varied.

Two years of the pandemic shut off recruiters’ access to schools, public events, fairs and other youth organizations where they often find prospects. Moving to online recruiting - as in-person meetings closed down - was only marginally successful. And some of the in-person access has been slow to open up again.

At the same time, companies like McDonalds are now wooing workers with tuition benefits and other increased perks that for years made the military an attractive profession. Military leaders say that they are suffering from the same labor shortage that has restaurants, airlines, shops and other businesses desperately scraping for workers.

Exacerbating the problem is the fact that according to estimates, just 23% of young people can meet the military’s fitness, educational and moral requirements - with many disqualified for reasons ranging from medical issues to criminal records and tattoos.

“We remain committed to maintaining our standards, investing in America’s youth, and emphasizing quality over quantity,” Gen. James McConville, chief of staff of the Army said.

It’s unclear how much the debate over the COVID-19 vaccine is playing in the recruiting struggles. So far, the Army has discharged a bit more than 1,700 soldiers for refusing to take the mandated vaccine. That’s a tiny fraction of the overall force size.

At the same time, the patriotism that fueled the rush to military service in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks has dimmed. Some may look around and see no more wars and terrorists to fight so they look elsewhere. And others see lucrative hiring campaigns by private industry and know the salaries will be better than military pay, and they will be less likely to end up wounded or killed in those jobs.

The services are grappling with a number of new programs and other changes to beef up recruiting but face lingering questions about how best to convince young people that military life is a viable option for them.

	During a recent Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the recruiting challenges, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., challenged the services to “think outside the box, creating new career paths, offering innovative pay and incentive structures, and realigning some capabilities from military to civilian workforces should all be on the table.”
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HEADLINE	10/01 NKorea launches ballistic missiles into sea
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/30/world/asia/north-korea-ballistic-missile-test.html
GIST	<p>SEOUL — North Korea launched two short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast on Saturday, a day after the United States, Japan and South Korea conducted a rare joint anti-submarine naval exercise.</p> <p>The missiles were launched from the Sunan District of Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, and fell into waters off the east coast, the South Korean military said. North Korea has often conducted missile tests from Sunan, the district where Pyongyang International Airport is located.</p> <p>The country has conducted four missile tests since Sunday, launching a total of seven short-range ballistic missiles. The tests have been seen largely as a response to joint military drills by the United States and its allies in the region.</p> <p>The navies of South Korea and the United States, including the American aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan, conducted joint exercises off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula from Monday through Thursday. On Friday, the Japanese navy joined them for a trilateral drill to demonstrate their combined ability to detect and track enemy submarines, amid signs that North Korea might be preparing to launch a new submarine it has been building for years and to test its submarine-launched ballistic missiles.</p> <p>It was the first trilateral drill of its kind since 2017.</p> <p>South Korea and the United States have conducted annual joint military drills for decades. They were canceled or scaled down under former President Donald J. Trump and former President Moon Jae-in of South Korea to add momentum to their diplomacy with the North’s leader, Kim Jong-un. But when President Biden and the new South Korean leader, Yoon Suk Yeol, met in May, they agreed to reinvigorate the exercises to counter North Korea’s growing nuclear and missile threat.</p> <p>Because of deep-rooted anti-Japanese sentiment among its people, South Korea has been wary of conducting joint military exercises with Japan, even though Washington wants Seoul and Tokyo to cooperate more closely to help deter North Korea. But under Mr. Yoon, South Korea has become more open to such cooperation. In August, the three nations conducted a joint missile warning and a ballistic missile search and tracking exercise off Hawaii, also a first since 2017.</p> <p>North Korea accuses the United States and its allies of conducting such drills to prepare for an invasion; Washington and its allies call their exercises purely defensive.</p> <p>North Korea has conducted 22 missile tests this year so far, more than any other year. Officials from both the United States and South Korea have warned for weeks that the country could also restart tests at the Punggye-ri underground nuclear testing site in the northeast of the country. In recent weeks, they have also detected increased activity at Sinpo on the east coast, where North Korea has been testing submarine-launched ballistic missiles since 2015.</p> <p>Such missiles are one of a series of new weapons Mr. Kim has ordered the North Korean military to develop, as he has vowed to increase his nuclear and missile capabilities “at the fastest possible speed.”</p> <p>While visiting South Korea this week, Vice President Kamala Harris called North Korea a “brutal dictatorship” and called its missile tests “provocative” and “destabilizing.”</p>

	<p>The North Korean missile launch on Saturday came hours before South Korea was scheduled to mark its Armed Forces Day with a ceremony that is expected to include a speech by Mr. Yoon.</p> <p>“Despite North Korea’s internal weaknesses and international isolation, it is rapidly modernizing weapons and taking advantage of a world divided by U.S.-China rivalry and Russia’s annexation of more Ukrainian territory,” said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul.</p> <p>“The Kim regime is also playing hardball with the Yoon administration while South Korean politics are hobbled by infighting.”</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Uganda races to contain Ebola outbreak
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/01/world/africa/uganda-ebola-outbreak.html
GIST	<p>NAIROBI, Kenya — An outbreak of Ebola in Uganda, caused by a strain for which there is no approved vaccine or drug treatment, is fanning fears across East Africa, as the authorities race to contain the virus that has already caused 35 confirmed infections and seven deaths.</p> <p>Scientists and health officials are now pushing to start clinical trials for two experimental vaccines to protect against this strain, which originated in Sudan in 1976. Even though there are relatively new and powerful Ebola vaccines, they do not protect against the Sudan strain — complicating efforts to quickly stamp out the disease before it overburdens the nation’s fragile health care system.</p> <p>In central Uganda, where the cases were reported, at least six medical workers have contracted the virus, leading some of their peers to request transfer elsewhere. Parents, concerned their children will catch the highly contagious virus, are withdrawing them from schools. And in a nation that has faced multiple Ebola outbreaks since it reported its first case in 2000, worries persist that another fast-spreading virus could precipitate restrictions that would devastate an economy still reeling from coronavirus shutdowns.</p> <p>“The whole situation gives me a lot of worry,” Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, the World Health Organization’s representative to Uganda, said in a phone interview.</p> <p>With the virus spreading to a fourth district on Friday and affecting an area covering a radius of more than 75 miles, “we are at a disadvantage,” he said.</p> <p>Ebola is a highly contagious disease that is transmitted through contact with sick or dead people or animals, causing fever, fatigue, diarrhea and internal and external bleeding. The 2014-16 outbreak in West Africa was the deadliest Ebola epidemic, killing more than 11,300 people, followed by the 2018 outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo that killed 2,280 people.</p> <p>So far, Ugandan officials have ruled out issuing stay-at-home orders or curfews, or restricting movement in schools, markets or houses of worship.</p> <p>“There is no need for anxiety, panic, restriction of movements or unnecessary closure of public places,” President Yoweri Museveni said after a televised speech this week. Mr. Museveni, who introduced stringent lockdowns during the onset of the coronavirus pandemic two years ago, said his nation had the ability to bring the Ebola virus to heel.</p> <p>Uganda is also working with neighboring countries, including Rwanda and Kenya, to step up vigilance at land borders and at airports.</p> <p>The latest outbreak in Uganda became public on Sept. 20, when health officials announced they had confirmed a case in a 24-year-old man who had been admitted to a hospital in the Mubende district, about 90 miles from the capital, Kampala.</p>

The patient had developed symptoms — including high fever and bleeding in the eyes — as early as Sept. 11, and had traveled to multiple clinics seeking assistance. He was eventually isolated and hospitalized on Sept. 15, but died five days later.

In his televised address, Mr. Museveni said the patient had said people with similar symptoms from his village had also died.

The delay in identifying and tracing the first human case, along with the fact that it was reported in a district abutting a key highway, has raised the concerns that the virus has spread to major urban centers and neighboring countries. The W.H.O. has said there were at least 18 more probable deaths and 19 more infections linked to the current outbreak.

The Sudan strain of the virus was last detected by Uganda in 2012. Those infected cannot spread the virus until symptoms appear, which can come after an incubation period ranging from two to 21 days.

Existing vaccines — like the injectable vaccine Ervebo, which proved successful in tackling the Zaire strain in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo — do not protect against the Sudan strain.

But experts hope that will soon change.

Mr. Yonas said at least six vaccine candidates were at different phases of development that can possibly guard against the Sudan strain. Two of those vaccines could proceed to a clinical trial in Uganda in the coming weeks after facing regulatory and ethics reviews from the Ugandan government.

The two vaccines likely to go ahead are being developed by the Washington-based Sabin Vaccine Institute and the University of Oxford. If approved, the single-dose Sabin vaccine would most likely be the first in line for trial. As new evidence emerges on the remaining vaccine candidates, the W.H.O. said it would work with an independent group of experts to help evaluate their suitability.

For now, health officials and multiple nongovernmental organizations are responding to the crisis by training medical workers, setting up new isolation units and facilitating more laboratories for testing.

More than 400 people who came into contact with those infected have also been successfully traced. Two patients were also discharged from hospital late on Friday, according to the W.H.O.

Officials have also started multiple outreach campaigns to educate the public on how to protect themselves, not stigmatize the infected and report those showing symptoms, said Oluma Jacob, a health adviser with Medical Teams International, an aid group responding to the outbreak.

This was done, he said, because “there was fear and a lot of panic in the community” when the cases were first reported in central Uganda.

That panic was evident among parents in Mubende district, where the first case was detected.

Nkwesiga Maxim, the principal of St. Kizito Madudu Roman Catholic Primary School in Mubende, said that more than half of the school’s students had not been attending classes.

“We have too much fear,” he said.

His sentiments were echoed by frontline health workers, who say the lack of proper compensation and protection — particularly for medical interns — was putting their lives at risk. The six health workers who were infected included four doctors, an anesthesiologist and a medical student, Mr. Museveni said. On Saturday, Uganda’s health minister announced that one of the doctors had died.

	Luswata Herbert, the secretary general of the Uganda Medical Association, said that if the government did not remedy the situation quickly, “health workers will refuse to attend to patients because they fear for their lives and their rights.”
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HEADLINE	10/01 Burkina Faso coup military uncertainty
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/01/world/africa/burkina-faso-coup-uncertainty.html
GIST	<p>DAKAR, Senegal — A day after military officers seized power in Burkina Faso, residents faced uncertainty over what would happen next, as the West African nation endures its second coup in eight months.</p> <p>Calm precariously returned on Saturday morning to the capital, Ouagadougou, where gunfire rang out early Friday. Shops reopened and traffic slowly resumed on roads that soldiers had been guarding a day earlier.</p> <p>After a day filled with uncertainty and rumors about the fate of Burkina Faso’s military government, military officers announced on Friday evening that they had removed the country’s leader, Lt. Col. Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who had taken power in January.</p> <p>It was a coup within a coup: Capt. Ibrahim Traoré was now in charge, the officers said on national television.</p> <p>“We have decided to take our responsibilities, driven by a single ideal: the restoration of security and integrity of our territory,” an officer said as a stern Captain Traoré sat next to him, surrounded by a dozen other officers covering their faces with sunglasses and neck guards.</p> <p>Shortly before midday Saturday, gunfire erupted again in the Ouagadougou city center, a reminder that even as coups have become a regular feature of Burkina Faso’s recent political life, the capital remained on edge. It was not immediately clear what the gunfire was related to.</p> <p>Leaders from the African Union and the West African regional bloc known as ECOWAS condemned the coup. In a statement released Friday, the chairman of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, called for constitutional order to be restored in Burkina Faso by July 2024, at the latest.</p> <p>Much remained unknown on Saturday about the whereabouts of Colonel Damiba — and about Captain Traoré in general.</p> <p>But like in January, the officers blamed the leader they had removed for failing to quash a mounting Islamist insurgency that has displaced nearly 10 percent of the population and compounded economic hardship in the nation of about 21 million.</p> <p>“We just want security,” Théophile Doussé, a travel agency employee, said on Saturday in Ouagadougou. “Without security, business is too complicated.”</p> <p>In his seizing of power, Colonel Damiba had blamed the civilian, democratically elected president, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, for failing to contain a worsening security situation. Hailed as a strong-willed officer with on-the-ground experience, Colonel Damiba vowed to bring back security and asked the nation to give until September before making a first assessment of the security situation.</p> <p>But as he addressed residents last month, Colonel Damiba had little progress to offer, said Constantin Gouvy, a Burkina Faso researcher based in Ouagadougou with the Clingendael Institute, a think tank funded by the Dutch government.</p>

For months, insurgents have blockaded towns and villages in the country's north and east, attacked army-escorted convoys supplying them, and spread the same insecurity that Colonel Damiba had vowed to tackle.

"There was this frustration brewing in the military and the population on the basis that he would make things better," Mr. Gouvry said, "but they actually were getting worse on some fronts."

Last month, [35 people died](#) when a convoy leaving a town under blockade hit a roadside bomb, and this past week 11 soldiers were killed when insurgents attacked another convoy on its way to the same town.

Nearly one-fifth of the country's population is in need of urgent humanitarian aid, [the United Nations said this week](#), and more people were displaced from January to June than the whole of last year, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Colonel Damiba had just returned from the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where he [described his coup](#) in January as "illegal in absolute terms" and "perhaps reprehensible," but "necessary and indispensable."

"It was, above all, an issue of survival for our nation," he said.

On Friday, the officers who removed him invoked the same arguments after they grew disillusioned with some of his actions.

A top concern from other officers, experts say, was that Colonel Damiba was perceived as a politician more than as a military leader, regularly wearing civilian clothes and tackling governance issues — which could be expected from a country's leader, but was not favored by the military.

Another key point of contention was the international allies that Colonel Damiba surrounded himself with. Unlike in neighboring Mali, where a military junta recently cut its defense ties with France and aligned itself with [Russia](#) and its [mercenaries](#) of [the Wagner Group](#), Burkina Faso's previous military government kept the doors open to France, its former colonizer, as well as to Russia and others — at least on paper.

But in practice, analysts said, Colonel Damiba was seen as leaning too heavily on France and Ivory Coast, drawing the ire of a part of the population in which an [anti-France](#), pro-Russia sentiment has been growing.

"Damiba wanted to create a balance between Russia and the West, but this isn't what the masses want at the moment," said Abdul Zanya Salifu, a scholar at the University of Calgary who focuses on the Sahel region, the vast stretch of land south of the Sahara that includes Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso's situation echoes Mali's, which also faced two coups only months apart — in 2020 and [last year](#) — and where the military has so far been unable to contain Islamist insurgents gaining ground in the country's southeast, near the border with Burkina Faso.

"Administration and governance require expertise, which the militaries don't have," Mr. Salifu added. "The situation in which Mali and Burkina Faso find themselves in is a prime example of that."

On Saturday in Ouagadougou, many said that Colonel Damiba most likely would not have stayed in power much longer.

"He couldn't accomplish the mission he came to fulfill, so it was time to quit," said Drissa Samandoulgou, 32, a student. "We'll judge the new ones on facts, too."

Whether the new leadership can bring much-needed changes remains another question, said Mr. Gouvry, the analyst at the Clingendael Institute.

	“Damiba’s justification for the coup became his undoing,” he said. “But what more does Traoré have to offer? What is going to be different, and how is he going to deliver?”
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HEADLINE	10/01 China entrenched: living with ‘zero Covid’
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/01/world/asia/china-covid-zero.html
GIST	<p>SHENZHEN, China — The signs of a looming lockdown in Shenzhen, China, had been building for a while. The city had been logging a few coronavirus infections for days. Daily Covid tests were required to go pretty much anywhere. Individual buildings had been sealed off.</p> <p>So when a hotel employee woke me up a little after 7 a.m. to explain that we were not allowed to step outside for four days, my initial disorientation quickly turned to resignation.</p> <p>Of course this happened. I live in China.</p> <p>As the rest of the world sheds more restrictions by the day, China’s rules are becoming more entrenched, along with the patterns of pandemic life under a government insistent on eliminating cases. People schedule lunch breaks around completing mandatory tests. They restructure commutes to minimize the number of health checkpoints along the way.</p> <p>A sense of possible disaster always lurks, driven by the experiences of Shanghai and other cities, where sudden lockdowns have left residents without food or medicine. A friend bought a second freezer so she could stock up on groceries.</p> <p>Yet the policies have been in place for so long, and with so little sign of easing, that navigating them feels — if not normal — at least routine. I know which testing site near my home returns results the quickest, and which grocer doesn’t check whether you’ve logged your visit for future contact tracing.</p> <p>The disruptive becomes typical; the once-unimaginable, reality. The pandemic has imposed new rituals around the world, but in China, the extremes make that process more unsettling.</p> <p>The most obviously jarring aspects, for me, were technological. China under “zero Covid” is a web of digital codes. At the entrance to every public space — restaurants, apartment complexes, even public restrooms — is a printed-out QR code that people must scan with their phones to log their visit. Everyone also has a personal health code, which uses test results and location history to assign a color. Green is good. Yellow or red, and you may be sent to quarantine.</p> <p>What actually determines the color of your code, though, is nebulous. When a banking scandal prompted protests in Henan Province this year, officials manipulated protesters’ health codes to block them from gathering. The morning in August that a colleague and I were scheduled to fly from the southern city of Guangzhou to Shanghai, her code suddenly, without explanation, turned yellow, meaning she could not board the plane. A health worker said the code would revert if she took another Covid test (never mind that we’d been taking daily tests for two weeks). It did — barely an hour before takeoff.</p> <p>Testing sites are ample, at least, since the government has ordered they be within a 15-minute walk in cities. And they are easily identified even from afar. They usually have a line, which can grow to be blocks long during lunchtime or after work. Many also have their own soundtrack: a prerecorded voice, ordering people to stand one meter apart, blaring through a megaphone on loop.</p> <p>On hot days, people wait sometimes for 30 minutes, face masks plastered to their skin by sweat. In the city of Chongqing this summer, residents lined up while wildfires raged nearby. The night I landed in Shanghai, officials had raised a typhoon warning, and ordered the skyline, including the iconic Pearl Tower, darkened in case of a power outage. I huddled with dozens of people in a testing line under umbrellas.</p>

Some features of Covid-era China are testaments to human creativity. The Guangzhou Library offers book sterilizing machines, which look like high-tech refrigerators. Manufacturers of personal protective equipment have devised [individual air conditioning units](#), which inflate medical workers' hazmat suits with cool air while they conduct hours of mass testing.

My favorite invention is the “[temporary quarantine area](#),” where anyone deemed a potential health risk while in public can be deposited until medical care arrives. Many of these areas seem more pro forma than designed to halt transmission. Some are tents in building lobbies. Some are corners with folding chairs. Near Beijing's biggest park, one is a roped-off section of open air.

It is possible to avoid the endless testing — by simply not going anywhere. In a part of Guangzhou dominated by warrens of small-scale textile factories, one worker told me he hadn't noticed the city's testing requirement to go outside the district. He and his friends rarely left it anyway, sleeping in dormitories close to the factories and lounging at a nearby lemon tea shop on their days off. Factory owners were supposed to check for up-to-date test results when hiring, but few did, he said.

The economic effects of the restrictions have been harder to ignore. He had been caught in several lockdowns, leaving him unable to work for weeks. Jobs were scarcer anyway, as fewer people were buying clothing. Lately, he'd been spending more time at the lemon tea shop.

Signs of the slowdown are everywhere. Taxi drivers offer unprompted assessments of how thin traffic is. In the food court near my office in Beijing, many of the stalls have gone dark, leaving diners at the surviving shops to eat in a spooky half-glow.

And the costs of zero Covid are not limited to lost jobs. When my hotel in Shenzhen locked down, the staff said we would have to pay for our extended stays ourselves.

I managed to escape the lockdown early. As the afternoon wore on, my colleague and I, who had been traveling together, noticed people slipping out through a staff exit. Under repeated pestering, the reception staff conceded that we could leave, if we found somewhere willing to take us despite our travel history to a lockdown area. Within 20 minutes, we were on our way to the train station.

That is what's impossible to get used to: the utter arbitrariness. You're under lockdown, until someone decides you're not.

You can take all the required tests, and be perfectly healthy, but your health code can still turn yellow.

For many Chinese, the past few years of the pandemic have stirred the spectrum of emotions from anger to frustration to grief. But the first word many people reach for, when I ask how they feel, is helplessness.

“What's the point in getting myself upset?” a single mother in Shenzhen, who had been locked down several times and worried about affording her son's tuition fees, said. It wouldn't change anything.

Others try to wrest back some sense of control, however small. A woman I met in Shanghai has given a house key to her neighbor, so someone can feed her cat if she gets snagged by a snap quarantine. People flash screenshots of old test results to inattentive security guards.

The Chinese internet is an endless reservoir of dark humor about the Covid rules, especially from people experiencing the harshest conditions. A user in [Xinjiang](#) recently posted a video captioned, “They sent us instruments in quarantine,” in which she banged a rock-hard biscuit against a table in time to an electronic beat. When residents in the city of Chengdu emptied grocery stores before a [citywide lockdown](#), social media users made posters joking that officials had announced a Black Friday-type shopping holiday.

I've been moved, and a little awed, by the ways people have found to plod through the pain. Still, I often think about a warning, or plea, written by a professor at Beijing's prestigious Tsinghua University, against getting too used to this circumscribed form of life.

“Do not let the prolonged epidemic and the economic downturn make you give up your dreams or lower your expectations,” the professor, Lao Dongyan, [wrote in an essay](#) shared widely on Chinese social media earlier this year before it was censored. “We need to adjust and adapt to the external environment, but not by doing that.”

This week, when I went to the testing site outside my office for my regular swab, I noticed that the station, which had previously closed at 6:30 p.m., was now 24-hour. I was delighted — until I considered what, exactly, I was celebrating.

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HEADLINE	09/30 New, redesigned Covid booster, who knew?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/30/health/omicron-booster-covid.html
GIST	<p>The new, redesigned Covid booster, which now protects against Omicron and its extremely contagious subvariants, appears to have a visibility problem.</p> <p>Federal authorities authorized the shot at the end of August, but by mid- to late September, nearly half of adults had heard little or nothing about it, according to a report by the Kaiser Family Foundation, based on the latest of its monthly surveys about attitudes toward the Covid vaccines.</p> <p>That could have troubling implications. The Biden administration has been touting the booster as a means of warding off a fresh fall or winter surge of the virus.</p> <p>“America is not rushing out to get the new booster,” said Drew Altman, the president of the Kaiser Family Foundation. “Most are only dimly aware of it, which is not surprising in a country that seems to have mostly moved on.” He added, “The exception may be older folks, who are at greater risk and early on are more interested in the new booster.”</p> <p>The survey was conducted from Sept. 15 to 26, online and by telephone, among a nationally representative sample of 1,534 adults.</p> <p>Ever since the first shots were rolled out, people 65 and older, who are the most vulnerable to Covid complications, have been the most compliant with getting the vaccine. They also displayed the broadest awareness of the new booster, the survey found, with almost half reporting either having already received the new dose or aiming to get it “as soon as possible.” Nearly a third of adults overall said they had planned to get it soon as well.</p> <p>But otherwise, confusion over eligibility seemed widespread, according to the survey.</p> <p>The Food and Drug Administration authorized the new booster made by Pfizer and BioNTech for fully vaccinated people as young as 12 and the new Moderna booster for those 18 and older. But among fully vaccinated adults 30 and under, 43 percent said they were unsure of whether the dose had been approved for them, and an additional 19 percent said they did not believe it had been.</p> <p>Dr. Mary Politi, a professor in the Division of Public Health Sciences at the Washington University School of Medicine, said that Americans had been experiencing Covid information overload and, as a consequence, decision-making fatigue. One way to overcome both, she said, “is to keep information simple, clear and consistent.”</p> <p>She added, “Unfortunately, the information coming from various sources has often been conflicting, with uncertain, unclear or changing guidelines.”</p> <p>Older adults were also better informed about their booster eligibility status. Among those 65 and older, more than half knew the booster was recommended, as did nearly half of those between the ages of 50 and 64.</p>

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommends](#) that fully vaccinated people 12 and older get the updated booster, it urges those 50 and older in particular to get it.

The report, which also looked at parents' views of the vaccine, found that there had been a [modest uptick in vaccination among the youngest children since July](#), when Covid vaccines for those between six months and 4 years old received emergency authorization. At the time, scarcely 7 percent of parents said they intended to get their children vaccinated; that percentage has risen to 19 percent, or nearly one in five parents.

But more parents are refusing the vaccine for their children, too. Now 53 percent of parents of children between six months and 4 years say they will "definitely not" let their children get the shots. Last January, 26 percent held that view.

While some 60 percent of parents said that their children between the ages of 12 and 17 had been vaccinated, about 30 percent of parents with children in that age group said their children would definitely not get the Covid vaccine.

Overall, 77 percent of respondents said they had gotten at least one dose of the Covid vaccine, with nearly half of those saying they had received at least one booster. But 23 percent said they were not vaccinated, and nearly all of that group said they would "definitely not" get it.

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HEADLINE	10/01 Florida challenge: find clean water to drink
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/01/us/florida-water-hurricane-ian.html
GIST	<p>FORT MYERS, Fla. — Francine Cole’s problem was a depressingly common one this week in Florida: First, there was too much water. Now, there is not enough of it.</p> <p>Ms. Cole, 50, lives in a two-story apartment on the western coast of Florida that was battered and flooded by Hurricane Ian. After the storm, she and her husband found themselves holed up on the second floor in a county where the water system was broken, the power was mostly out, and many of the taps, including hers, were dry.</p> <p>The downstairs, Ms. Cole said, reeked of sewage. She had bought a couple of cases of water before the storm, but now she had to decide to whether use it to clean or to drink. She and her husband had tried to clean up with water from a small pond, but it proved to be an ineffective solution. The grime was unbearable. They were thirsty.</p> <p>“We’re really worried,” she said.</p> <p>Hurricane Ian, which made a second U.S. landfall Friday afternoon on the coast of South Carolina, visited tremendous visible devastation as it cut its northeastward path across the Florida peninsula earlier this week, leaving wrecked houses and businesses along the Gulf coast and thick tangles of tree limbs and debris further inland.</p> <p>But some of the most potent problems in the state were less easy to see, including the effect on water systems, as the electricity needed to keep water flowing went out in some areas, and water lines were severed by the storm. The state’s water troubles were reflected on a regularly updated list of boil-water advisories maintained by the Florida Department of Health. On Monday, it had no such notices to report. On Friday, there were nearly 50 advisories in effect.</p> <p>“As far as I’m aware, every single case is related to the hurricane,” Jae Williams, a Health Department spokesman, said on Friday.</p>

Boil-water advisories, which alert residents to the possibility of biological contamination in a water system, can be issued for a number of reasons and are often prompted by malfunctions or damage that results in a loss of pressure or other problems. Residents at low elevations are typically told to boil any water used for drinking or cooking for at least one minute.

But in some of the hardest-hit places, water was not coming out of the taps. And owners of electric stoves had limited options in a state where more than 1.7 million power customers were without electricity as of Friday afternoon.

Some of the areas on the boil-water list were small, like the Spanish Main Travel Resort, an R.V. park in Hillsborough County, on the western side of the state. In other cases, the advisories covered entire cities, like Bartow, Fla., a city of about 20,000 near the geographic center of the peninsula, where the water system experienced several line breaks.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced Friday that it had sent 1.6 million liters of water to Florida and promised that another 6.6 million liters were on the way. The water was part of an enormous federal response focused on providing basic human services, including 5.5 million meals, more than 400 ambulances and four aircraft to evacuate medically vulnerable people from nursing homes and other facilities.

But the worst trouble was in Lee County, where a badly damaged water system was affecting a population of nearly 760,000, forcing residents to hunt through a tableau of ruin for bottled-water distribution sites and forcing state and federal officials to improvise some creative solutions.

Ms. Cole and others were given some water Friday at Next Level Church in Fort Myers, where orange-shirted volunteers — most of whom had no power or water in their own houses — piled cases of water and food into the trunks of waiting cars. The volunteers stuck a yellow sticky note with a number on each driver's door reflecting the number of household residents, a running tally of desperation: 13, 6, 1.

Victoria Kent, 28, who pulled up with her 8-year-old daughter in the back seat, had subsisted on juice boxes over the last two days. She wouldn't be paid until the end of the month and didn't have the money to buy last-minute storm supplies, including extra water.

And anyway, she said, she had to keep working — selling insurance over the phone from her house — until the power had cut off. They were almost out of food and had run out of water completely. "We've just been driving around to see who can help us," she said. "And I'm down below half a tank."

The problem was affecting institutions as well as residents. As of Friday morning, three hospitals in Lee County were without water, forcing administrators to evacuate some patients, said Mary Mayhew, president and chief executive of the Florida Hospital Association. "The public water system has had breaks, and the hospitals are not getting access to water, or the water pressure is completely inadequate," Ms. Mayhew said in a phone interview.

Later in the day, however, Kevin Guthrie, director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, said in a news conference that the state had "solved the water problem temporarily" by setting up tanks at the hospitals and "ferrying 20,000 gallons of water about five times a day" to each hospital. Mr. Guthrie also said that more than 14,000 gallons of diesel fuel had been shipped to Fort Myers for use at a water plant that served the hospitals.

Down the road from the church on Friday, three large water tanker trucks were parked behind the Gulf Coast Medical Center, which was busy with the coming and going of ambulances and helicopters. The Florida National Guard was handing out bottled water and meals at the Lee County Sports Complex nearby.

	<p>In a news conference Friday morning, Gov. Ron DeSantis singled out water problems as among the most pressing issues he had discussed with federal officials, calling it “critical to get that infrastructure back up and running.”</p> <p>The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said in a tweet on Friday that its experts were meeting with county officials, noting that work crews had begun using water trucks to “pressurize critical facilities to locate and repair leaks.”</p> <p>The water challenges were different farther inland. In Polk County, in Central Florida, Ian stormed through on Thursday night, leaving streets strewn with debris and thousands of people without power. Also without power Friday morning were 55 of the county’s 350-plus “lift stations,” which pump wastewater to the local treatment plant.</p> <p>Mark Addison, a manager for utilities in Polk County, said one short-term solution was to warn people to conserve water and not overwhelm a system that could send dirty water back through their pipes and into their homes.</p> <p>The ultimate solution — which speaks to another looming infrastructure challenge for Florida — was to work to get the power back on quickly.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Putin nuclear threats stir alarm
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/01/world/europe/washington-putin-nuclear-threats.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — For the first time since the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, top government leaders in Moscow are making explicit nuclear threats and officials in Washington are gaming out scenarios should President Vladimir V. Putin decide to use a tactical nuclear weapon to make up for the failings of Russian troops in Ukraine.</p> <p>In a speech on Friday, Mr. Putin raised the prospect anew, calling the United States and NATO enemies seeking Russia’s collapse and declaring again that he would use “all available means” to defend Russian territory — which he has now declared includes four provinces of eastern Ukraine.</p> <p>Mr. Putin reminded the world of President Harry S. Truman’s decision to drop atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, 77 years ago, adding, “By the way, they created a precedent.” On Saturday, the strongman leader of the southern Russian republic of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, said Mr. Putin should consider using “low-yield nuclear weapons” in Ukraine, becoming the first prominent Russian official to openly call for such a strike.</p> <p>Senior American officials say they think the chances that Mr. Putin would employ a nuclear weapon remain low. They say they have seen no evidence that he is moving any of his nuclear assets, and a recent Pentagon analysis suggests the military benefits would be few. And the cost for Mr. Putin — in a furious international response, perhaps even from the Chinese, whose support he needs most — could be tremendous.</p> <p>But they are far more worried about the possibility now than they were at the beginning of the Ukraine conflict in February. After a series of humiliating retreats, astoundingly high casualty rates and a deeply unpopular move to draft young Russian men into service, Mr. Putin clearly sees the threat of his nuclear arsenal as a way to instill fear, and perhaps to recover some respect for Russia’s power.</p> <p>Most important, he may see the threat of unleashing part of his stockpile of roughly 2,000 so-called tactical nuclear weapons as a way to extort concessions that he has been unable to win on the battlefield. Such weapons involve much smaller, less-powerful warheads than those used in intercontinental missiles, which can destroy whole cities. Some tactical nuclear warheads are small enough to fit in individual artillery rounds, though they can still devastate and irradiate a few blocks, or a single military base.</p>

Some Russian military analysts have suggested exploding a tactical weapon over a remote place like the Black Sea as a demonstration, or perhaps actually using one against a Ukrainian base.

“This is not a bluff,” Mr. Putin said last month, a reminder that making first use of nuclear weapons is an integral part of Russian military strategy. Last weekend, President Biden’s national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, responded that any nuclear weapon use would result in “catastrophic consequences” for Russia, adding that in private communications with Moscow, the United States had “spelled out” how America and the world would react.

Such threats and counterthreats, seemingly right out of the worst moments of the Cold War, are exactly the kind that most Americans and Russians thought ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

For a quarter-century, both sides celebrated a reduction in their strategic weapons, the intercontinental ballistic missiles that can reach across oceans. When nuclear threats were made, it was mostly by aspiring atomic powers, like North Korea, which has not yet demonstrated that its weapons can reach American shores.

But in the past seven months, that has changed.

In issuing his warning to Russia last week, Mr. Sullivan declined to describe the playbook of American or NATO responses, knowing that one key to Cold War deterrence was some degree of ambiguity.

But in background conversations, a range of officials suggested that if Russia detonated a tactical nuclear weapon on Ukrainian soil, the options included unplugging Russia from the world economy or some kind of military response — though one that would most likely be delivered by the Ukrainians with Western-provided, conventional weapons.

For their part, Russian analysts and officials see the specter of nuclear conflict as giving a distinct advantage to their side.

Because the outcome of the war in Ukraine is of existential significance to the Kremlin, but not to the White House, they say, Russian officials seem to believe they would have the advantage in the test of wills that nuclear brinkmanship represents.

Dmitri A. Medvedev, a former Russian president and the hawkish vice chairman of Mr. Putin’s Security Council, laid out that thesis this past week in a post on the Telegram social network. If Russia were forced to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, he argued, it was unlikely that NATO would intervene militarily because of the risk that a direct attack on Russia could lead to all-out nuclear war.

“Overseas and European demagogues are not going to perish in a nuclear apocalypse,” he wrote. “Therefore, they will swallow the use of any weapon in the current conflict.”

As the full extent of Ukraine’s gains in its September counteroffensive became apparent, the Biden administration intensified its study of the steps that Mr. Putin might take to reverse the perception that the Russian Army was losing the war. Administration officials quickly saw some of their predictions come true, as Mr. Putin announced a mobilization of military reserves despite the dissent it provoked.

Now, with the annexation of Ukrainian territory, worry is rising in Washington. Should Ukraine be able to build on its success, and Mr. Putin face humiliating defeat, U.S. officials are concerned he might quickly push through the remaining steps and consider the use of a nuclear weapon.

And with Russian forces retreating from the strategic railroad hub of Lyman — in territory annexed by Moscow on Friday — Russia continues to lose ground in eastern Ukraine.

Mr. Putin clearly sees Russia’s nuclear arsenal as the foundation of what remains of Russia’s great power status.

He has trumpeted its world-destroying potential in his state-of-the-nation speeches and has insisted that in the event of a nuclear war, “we would go to paradise as martyrs, while they would simply perish.”

The revelation of the Ukraine conflict — that Russia’s conventional forces were poorly trained, unimaginative and ill-equipped — has made Mr. Putin all the more dependent on his unconventional weapons, an inherently unstable balance of forces.

“We’re in a situation in which superiority in resources and conventional weaponry is on the side of the West,” said Vasily Kashin, who specializes in military and political issues at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow. “Russia’s power is based on its nuclear arsenal.”

The problem for Mr. Putin is how to wring real-world advantage from the destructive force of Russia’s nuclear warheads without actually using them. To some degree, he has been successful. Mr. Biden’s reluctance to put American or NATO troops into direct combat roles, or to provide Ukraine with weapons that could strike deep inside Russia, is rooted in concern about nuclear escalation.

But Mr. Putin also faces constraints. His threat to use nuclear weapons must seem credible, and the repeated incantation of nuclear threats can undermine their effectiveness. The threat may be more effective than actually using a weapon because the cost to Russia of breaking a 77-year taboo could be astronomically high. Most experts think he would reach for them only if Russia — or Mr. Putin himself — felt an existential threat.

“The chance that Putin would strike out of the blue seems very low,” said Graham T. Allison, the author of a seminal 1971 book about the Cuban Missile Crisis, “Essence of Decision.” “But as Kennedy said back then, the plausible scenario is if a leader is forced to choose between a catastrophic humiliation and a roll of the dice that might yield success.”

Mr. Allison suspects Mr. Putin will not face that choice unless Ukraine succeeds in pushing Russian forces out of the areas Mr. Putin annexed on Friday.

For that reason, the next few weeks could prove a particularly dangerous time, a range of American and European officials agree. But Mr. Putin is not likely to use a nuclear weapon immediately. His initial steps, according to the officials, would probably involve a sabotage campaign in Europe, attacking Ukraine’s energy infrastructure or targeting senior officials in Kyiv. Some officials wonder if the attacks on the Nord Stream pipelines may have been a first step — though it is not clear Russia was behind that sabotage.

But by escalating his nuclear threats in combination with the annexation, Mr. Putin appears to have two goals in mind. One is to scare the United States and NATO from direct intervention in Ukraine. The second is to force the West to back off supporting Ukraine at all, or to perhaps force the Ukrainians to the negotiating table in a disadvantageous position.

In Russia, the airwaves are filled with threats that constantly refer to Moscow’s nuclear options.

In a recent state television interview, the foreign policy analyst Dmitri Trenin said that Russia needed to convince Washington that escalation could lead to nuclear strikes against the American mainland.

“The American strategy of inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia is based on the belief that Russia will not use nuclear weapons: Either it will be afraid, or it will consider that the destruction of civilization is still too high a price for maintaining its position,” Mr. Trenin said. “And here, in my opinion, lies a potentially fatal miscalculation for all of humanity.”

But the threshold at which Mr. Putin would resort to nuclear weapons — or how he would use them — is far from clear. Another analyst, Ivan Timofeev, said in a phone interview that he believed that Mr. Putin would use them only in the event of direct NATO intervention in Ukraine.

Using them against Ukrainian forces in the context of the current war would bring limited military advantage while deepening Russia's international isolation, he said.

"I don't see the possibility that China or India or any other country friendly to Russia would support such a decision," said Mr. Timofeev, the program director for the Russian International Affairs Council, a research organization close to the Russian government. "If you look at interests pragmatically and rationally, this scenario is not beneficial to Russia."

Mr. Kashin, the Higher School of Economics professor, said that his analysis of recent statements by Russian officials led him to conclude that Mr. Putin's annexation on Friday was a signal that further major gains by Ukraine could lead to nuclear use.

"These territories will not be given up," Mr. Kashin said.

"A one-time use of a nuclear weapon would be pointless; it wouldn't change anything," he added. "I think it would be a rather serious use because that is what would allow the situation on the battlefield to be changed immediately."

Mr. Putin's veiled threats about using nuclear weapons have suggested he has also given thought to large-scale, game-changing strikes. He said last year that anyone threatening Russia's core interests would face an "asymmetric, swift and tough" response. And in June, he was vague when asked how he would respond if Ukraine and the West crossed certain "red lines" in the war.

But Mr. Putin warned that Russia could target "decision-making centers," a broad term that analysts have interpreted as major government buildings and other military and political hubs.

"With regard to the red lines," he said, "let me keep this to myself because on our part, it will include fairly tough actions targeted at the decision-making centers."

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HEADLINE	10/01 Putin supporters enraged by retreat
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/01/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#lyman-russia-retreat-putin
GIST	<p>Two powerful supporters of President Vladimir V. Putin turned on Russia's military leadership on Saturday after it ordered a retreat from a key city in eastern Ukraine, a striking sign of dissent within the Russian elite that comes as the Kremlin tries to project an image of strength and unity.</p> <p>Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of the southern Russian republic of Chechnya, wrote on the Telegram messaging app that Russia's top military brass had "covered for" an "incompetent" general who should now be "sent to the front to wash his shame off with blood."</p> <p>Yevgeny Prigozhin, the business magnate close to Mr. Putin who leads the Wagner Group — an army of mercenaries fighting for Russia in the war — issued a statement an hour later declaring that he agreed with Mr. Kadyrov.</p> <p>"Send all these pieces of garbage barefoot with machine guns straight to the front," Mr. Prigozhin said in an apparent reference to Russia's military leaders.</p> <p>The Kremlin's military leadership, including Defense Minister Sergei K. Shoigu, a close associate of Mr. Putin, has come under increasingly withering criticism in recent months from some pro-war Russian bloggers, who view them as corrupt bureaucrats failing as military strategists. That criticism expanded after Russia's stunning retreat in northeastern Ukraine last month.</p> <p>But the fury on Saturday after Russia lost the city of Lyman, a key rail hub, was extraordinary both in its timing and the fact that it was coming not just from commentators on social media, but from senior allies of Mr. Putin.</p>

It underscored that the retreat marked a major embarrassment for the Kremlin, coming just 24 hours after the festivities in Moscow marking the attempted annexation of four Ukrainian regions by Mr. Putin that Western officials have decried as illegal.

The city of Lyman in the Donetsk region is part of the annexed territory that Mr. Putin described [in his speech on Friday](#) as “Novorossiia,” or New Russia, casting it as part of the country’s historical heartland. The fact that his troops there pulled back just a day later shocked Russian pro-war commentators, who interpreted the retreat as a sign that their government’s grand and aggressive rhetoric did not match reality.

As news of an impending rout in Lyman circulated on social media, Yegor Kholmogorov, a nationalist pundit, wrote on Telegram that “any retreat will look like a bad omen against the backdrop of yesterday’s events in Moscow.”

After Russia confirmed the withdrawal, Yevgeny Primakov, the head of a government agency managing ties with Russians abroad, wrote on Telegram that “we have given a Russian city to the enemy” for the first time since World War II.

But it was the public criticism by Mr. Kadyrov and Mr. Prigozhin — both of whom have become influential figures in Russia’s war effort operating independently from the Defense Ministry — that carried the most significance. It suggested that Mr. Putin would now face even more pressure from the hawks in his inner circle to escalate the war.

One concern in the West is that Mr. Putin might decide to use a nuclear weapon in Ukraine, a possibility he has hinted at.

[American officials are already gaming out scenarios](#) should Mr. Putin decide to use a tactical nuclear weapon to make up for the recent failings of Russian troops in Ukraine — and have issued stark warnings to the Russian leader about the catastrophic consequences of such a move.

In his post on Saturday, Mr. Kadyrov became one of the first Russian public officials to openly call for the use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine.

“I don’t know what the Russian Ministry of Defense reports to the commander in chief,” Mr. Kadyrov wrote. “But in my personal opinion, more drastic measures should be taken, up to the declaration of martial law in the border areas and the use of low-yield nuclear weapons.”

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HEADLINE	10/01 Russian forces retreat from key city
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/01/world/russia-ukraine-war-news
GIST	<p>RIVNE, Ukraine — Russian forces withdrew from the strategic eastern city of Lyman on Saturday, a significant setback for Moscow just a day after President Vladimir V. Putin declared that the region where it lies was now part of Russia.</p> <p>The battle for Lyman, a city in Donetsk Province with a prewar population of 20,000, is particularly poorly timed for the Kremlin, coming shortly after Mr. Putin illegally declared the annexation of four regions in Ukraine where battles are still raging and a month after Kyiv’s victories in the country’s northeast.</p> <p>The loss of the rail hub puts additional pressure on the Kremlin, which has been facing blowback at home over its losses on the battlefield and over the conscription of hundreds of thousands of men to fight in Ukraine.</p>

Hours after Ukraine's Defense Ministry said its forces were entering the city, Russia's Ministry of Defense said it had made the decision to pull out of Lyman. The withdrawal staved off a potential worst-case scenario for the Kremlin in which Russian troops were trapped.

"Due to the risk to be encircled, the allied forces were withdrawn" from the city to "more advantageous" locations, the ministry said in a statement posted on Telegram.

Earlier Ukraine's Defense Ministry had posted a video on Twitter showing two soldiers unfurling the country's yellow-and-blue flag at a sign marking the city limits. The army "will always have the decisive vote in today's and any future 'referendums,'" it added in a pointed reference to the discredited votes taken to justify the annexation.

A senior Ukrainian military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Lyman was "already liberated."

"A mop-up is ongoing," the official said. "The Russians have nowhere to run."

Last month's sweeping and successful Ukrainian counteroffensive in the country's northeast sent Russian soldiers in full retreat, leaving Moscow's troops in Lyman isolated and severed from their supply lines. But that Ukrainian victory came at a cost: Russian forces managed to rush troops to Lyman, fighting viciously for the city amid Mr. Putin's new territorial claims in eastern and southern Ukraine.

Lyman, which [fell to the Russians](#) in May, serves as a rail hub that flows into Donbas, the mineral rich region in the Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk provinces that has long been the focus of Mr. Putin's war aims.

Ukraine's ability to recapture Lyman is the most significant proof yet that Russia's ability to control the Donbas is anything but certain.

With Lyman under Ukrainian control the battle for the Donbas enters a new phase. The city's recapture means that Ukraine's troops have gained a new foothold in the region and are positioned to claw back territory before winter sets in.

The next target, if the Ukrainian military continues its advance, would likely be Svatove, a city north east of Lyman where Russians have retrenched following their defeat in the northeast, according to analysts.

Russia's military, depleted and losing ground, is likely to be faced with a decision that involves shuttling resources from other parts of the front to slow Ukraine's advance or continuing to lose chunks of the Donbas.

Some of the nearest Russian reinforcements are roughly 25 miles to the southeast, around the city of Bakhmut. Wagner group, an infamous paramilitary unit that reports directly to the Kremlin, has battered the Ukrainian defenders there but has failed to seize significant parts of the city.

Ukraine's slow moving offensive in the south toward the port city of Kherson has largely been overshadowed by events in the east. But fighting there remains fierce as better trained Russian forces have put up staunch resistance against advancing Ukrainian troops.

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HEADLINE	09/30 Florida county officials delayed evacuation
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/30/us/hurricane-ian-lee-county-fort-myers-delay.html
GIST	FORT MYERS, Fla. — As Hurricane Ian charged toward the western coast of Florida this week, the warnings from forecasters were growing more urgent. Life-threatening storm surge threatened to deluge the region from Tampa all the way to Fort Myers.

But while officials along much of that coastline responded with orders to evacuate on Monday, emergency managers in Lee County held off, pondering during the day whether to tell people to flee, but then deciding to see how the forecast evolved overnight.

The delay, an apparent violation of the meticulous evacuation strategy the county had crafted for just such an emergency, may have contributed to catastrophic consequences that are still coming into focus as the death toll continues to climb.

At least 16 storm-related deaths have been identified in Lee County, the highest toll anywhere in the state, as survivors describe the sudden surge of water — predicted as a possibility by the National Hurricane Service in the days before the storm hit — that sent some of them scrambling for safety in attics and on rooftops.

Lee County, which includes the hard-hit seaside community of Fort Myers Beach, as well as the towns of Fort Myers, Sanibel and Cape Coral, did not issue a mandatory evacuation order for the areas likely to be hardest hit until Tuesday morning, a day after several neighboring counties had ordered their most vulnerable residents to flee.

By then, some residents recalled that they had little time to evacuate. Dana Ferguson, 33, a medical assistant in Fort Myers, said she had been at work when the first text message appeared on her phone Tuesday morning. By the time she arrived home, it was too late to find anywhere to go, so she hunkered down with her husband and three children to wait as a wall of water began surging through areas of Fort Myers, including some that were well away from the coastline.

“I felt there wasn’t enough time,” she said.

Ms. Ferguson said she and her family fled to the second floor, lugging a generator and dry food, as the water rose through their living room. The 6-year-old was in tears.

Kevin Ruane, a Lee County commissioner and a former mayor of Sanibel, said the county had postponed ordering an extensive evacuation because the earlier hurricane modeling had shown the storm heading farther north.

“I think we responded as quickly as we humanly could have,” he said.

Gov. Ron DeSantis and his state emergency management director also said the earlier forecasts had predicted the brunt of the storm’s fury would strike farther north.

“There is a difference between a storm that’s going to hit north Florida that will have peripheral effects on your region, versus one that’s making a direct impact,” Mr. DeSantis said at a news conference on Friday in Lee County. “And so what I saw in southwest Florida is, as the data changed, they sprung into action.”

But while the track of Hurricane Ian did shift closer to Lee County in the days before it made landfall, the surge risks the county faced — even with the more northerly track — were becoming apparent as early as Sunday night.

At that point, the National Hurricane Center produced modeling showing a chance of a storm surge covering much of Cape Coral and Fort Myers. Parts of Fort Myers Beach, even in that case, had a 40 percent chance of a six-foot-high storm surge, according to the surge forecasts.

Lee County’s emergency planning documents had set out a time-is-of-the-essence strategy, noting that the region’s large population and limited road system make it difficult to evacuate the county swiftly. Over years of work, the county has created a phased approach that expands the scope of evacuations in proportion to the certainty of risk. “Severe events may require decisions with little solid information,” the documents say.

The county's plan proposes an initial evacuation if there is even a 10 percent chance that a storm surge will go six feet above ground level; based on a sliding scale, the plan also calls for an evacuation if there is a 60 percent chance of a three-foot storm surge.

Along with the forecasts on Sunday night, updated forecasts on Monday warned that many areas of Cape Coral and Fort Myers had between a 10 and a 40 percent chance of a storm surge above six feet, with some areas possibly seeing a surge of more than nine feet.

Over those Monday hours, neighboring Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota and Charlotte counties issued evacuation orders, while Sarasota County announced that it expected evacuation orders to be in effect for the following morning. In Lee County, however, officials said they were waiting to make a more up-to-date assessment the following morning.

"Once we have a better grasp on all of that dynamic, we will have a better understanding about what areas we may call for evacuation, and, at the same time, a determination of what shelters will be open," the Lee County Manager, Roger Desjarlais, said on Monday afternoon.

But forecasters with the National Hurricane Center were growing more explicit in their warnings for the region. In a 5 p.m. update on Monday, they wrote that the highest risk for "life-threatening storm surge" was in the area from Fort Myers to Tampa Bay.

"Residents in these areas should listen to advice given by local officials," the hurricane center wrote. New modeling showed that some areas along Fort Myers Beach were more likely than not to see a six-foot surge.

Mr. Ruane, the county commissioner, said that one challenge the county faced was that the local schools had been designed to be shelters and that the school board had made the decision to keep them open on Monday.

By the following morning, at 7 a.m. on Tuesday, Mr. Desjarlais announced a partial evacuation order but emphasized that "the areas being evacuated are small" compared with a previous hurricane evacuation.

The county held off on further evacuations, despite a forecast that showed potential surge into areas not covered by the order. Officials expanded their evacuation order later in the morning.

By the middle of the afternoon, Lee County officials were more urgent in their recommendation: "The time to evacuate is now, and the window is closing," they wrote in a message on Facebook.

Katherine Morong, 32, said she had been prepared earlier in the week to hunker down and ride out the storm based on the guidance from local officials. The sudden evacuation order on Tuesday morning left her scrambling, she said, as she set out in her car in the rain.

"The county could have been more proactive and could have given us more time to evacuate," she said. On the road toward the east side of the state, she said, she was driving through torrents of rain, with tornadoes nearby.

Joe Brosseau, 65, said he did not receive any evacuation notice. As the storm surge began pouring in on Wednesday morning, he said, he considered evacuating but realized it was too late.

He climbed up a ladder with his 70-year-old wife and dog to reach a crawl space in his garage. He brought tools in case he needed to break through the roof to escape.

"It was terrifying," Mr. Brosseau said. "It was the absolute scariest thing. Trying to get that dog and my wife up a ladder to the crawl space. And then to spend six hours there."

	<p>Some residents said they had seen the forecasts but decided to remain at home anyway — veterans of many past storms with dire predictions that had not come to pass.</p> <p>“People were made aware, they were told about the dangers and some people just made the decision that they did not want to leave,” Mr. DeSantis said on Friday.</p> <p>Joe Santini, a retired physician’s assistant, said he would not have fled his home even if there had been an evacuation order issued well before the storm. He said that he had lived in the Fort Myers area most of his life, and that he would not know where else to go.</p> <p>“I’ve stuck around for every other one,” he said.</p> <p>The water rushed into his home around dusk on Wednesday night, and on Friday, there was still a high-water mark about a foot above the floor — leaving Mr. Santini a little stunned. “I don’t think it’s ever surged as high as it did,” he said.</p> <p>Lee County is now an epicenter of devastation, with mass destruction at Fort Myers Beach, the partial collapse of the Sanibel Causeway and entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble. With water mains broken, the county utilities agency has advised residents to boil their water.</p> <p>President Biden said on Friday that the destruction from the storm was likely to be among the worst in U.S. history.</p> <p>“It’s going to take months, years to rebuild,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 Putin: Russia in existential battle US, West
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/30/world/europe/putin-speech-ukraine-russia.html
GIST	<p>President Vladimir V. Putin asserted on Friday that Russia would annex four Ukrainian regions and decried the United States for “Satanism,” in a speech that marked an escalation in Moscow’s war against Ukraine. In starkly confrontational terms, he positioned Russia as fighting an existential battle with Western elites he deemed “the enemy.”</p> <p>Speaking to hundreds of Russian lawmakers and governors in a grand Kremlin hall, Mr. Putin said that the residents of the four regions — which are still partially controlled by Ukrainian forces — would become Russia’s citizens “forever.” He then held a signing ceremony with the Russian-installed heads of those regions to start the official annexation process, before clasping hands with them and chanting “Russia! Russia!”</p> <p>The Biden administration quickly condemned the annexations, saying they “have no legitimacy,” and enacted a round of new sanctions on Russia’s defense and technology industries as punishment for Moscow’s actions.</p> <p>Mr. Putin’s address came against a backdrop of Russian setbacks on the battlefield, where Ukraine’s forces have scored stunning victories in recent weeks in the east. As the Russian leader spoke, Ukrainian officials said their army had moved closer to encircling the Russian-occupied town of Lyman, a strategically important hub in the Donetsk region that lies inside the territory Mr. Putin is claiming.</p> <p>Even by Mr. Putin’s increasingly antagonistic standards, the speech was an extraordinary combination of bluster and menace, mixing conspiratorial riffs against an American-led “neocolonial system” with an appeal to the world to see Russia as the leader of an uprising against American power.</p> <p>He referred to “the ruling circles of the so-called West” as “the enemy” — a word he rarely uses in reference to the West — and struck a tone of anger and defiance. And he again raised the specter of</p>

nuclear weapons, which the Kremlin has made veiled threats about using, noting in a cryptic aside that the atomic bombs the United States dropped on Japan in 1945 had “created a precedent.”

“Not only do Western elites deny national sovereignty and international law,” he said in the 37-minute address. “Their hegemony has a pronounced character of totalitarianism, despotism and apartheid.”

Western leaders have condemned Russia’s annexations as illegal, and the “referendums” that preceded them — purporting to show overwhelming local support for joining Russia — as fraudulent. President Biden said “the United States will always honor Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders.”

In the United Nations Security Council, 10 of 15 nations voted on Friday in favor of a U.S.-Albania resolution condemning Moscow’s actions, but Russia exercised the veto power it holds as a permanent member. Mr. Putin’s sometime allies, China and India, which have expressed growing uneasiness with his war on Ukraine, were among four nations that abstained; only Russia voted against the resolution.

Ukraine’s government has rebuffed Mr. Putin’s claims and vowed to retake territory captured by Russia in the east and south. “Everything will be Ukraine,” President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on Friday on the Telegram social network.

In a video, Mr. Zelensky accused the Kremlin of trying to “steal something that does not belong to it,” adding “Ukraine will not allow that.”

He also announced that he was [fast-tracking his country’s application to join NATO](#) — a move that Russia vehemently opposes and that faces steep hurdles, given that admission to the alliance requires unanimous consent from all 30 member nations.

Mr. Putin insisted that Russia’s position on annexing the four territories was nonnegotiable, adding that it would defend them “with all the forces and means at our disposal.”

“I call on the Kyiv regime to immediately cease-fire and all military action,” he said, and “to return to the negotiating table.”

“But we will not discuss the decision of the people of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson,” he went on, referring to the four Ukrainian regions being annexed. “It has been made. Russia will not betray it.”

Earlier Friday, Russia unleashed one of the deadliest attacks against Ukrainian civilians in weeks with a strike in the Zaporizhzhia region, one of those Russia has said it is annexing. The attack killed 25 people and injured another 66, Ukraine’s prosecutor general said. It was part of a flurry of strikes against Ukrainian towns just hours before Mr. Putin spoke.

Speaking at the White House, Mr. Biden said “America and its allies are not going to be intimidated by Putin and his reckless words and threats.” But for Washington and its European allies, Mr. Putin’s decision to escalate his rhetoric, while insisting he was ready to negotiate, sets up difficult choices about how much direct confrontation they are willing to risk with Moscow.

The military draft that Mr. Putin declared last week means that he will soon have more men to send to the front line, while his claims of an existential conflict appeared designed to prepare his populace for more trying times ahead.

“The West has to think what is the final price it is ready to pay for Ukraine,” said Alexander Baunov, a Russian international policy expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. “And it is a very serious question because we don’t know the further appetites of Putin’s Russia.”

But Mr. Putin faces monumental challenges of his own. Conscription has proved so unpopular that on Thursday he took the rare step of [acknowledging on national television](#) mistakes by his government in how it was carried out.

Tens of thousands of young men are fleeing Russia and the draft, braving miles-long lines at the borders with Georgia and Kazakhstan, a signal that many Russians are not buying Mr. Putin's arguments for the invasion of Ukraine. And the chaos of the draft has dealt another setback to Russia's sanctions-scarred economy.

Mr. Putin's answer on Friday was to respond with threats, jingoism and conspiracy theories. In the evening, he appeared at a concert and rally in Red Square and, standing before St. Basil's Cathedral, led the crowd in a chant of "Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!"

"The truth is behind us, and in truth there is strength, which means victory!" Mr. Putin said at the end of his brief address at the rally, borrowing a catchphrase from a 2000 Russian crime film. "Victory will be ours!"

In his speech at the Kremlin, Mr. Putin cast the conflict with the West in even more severe terms than he had previously, reeling off centuries of Western military actions to denounce the American-led world order as fundamentally evil, corrupt and set on Russia's destruction.

"The repression of freedom is taking on the outlines of a reverse religion, of real Satanism," Mr. Putin said, asserting that liberal Western values on matters like gender identity amounted to a "denial of man."

But Mr. Putin offered few new details on the matter that is now perhaps of greatest concern in Western capitals — whether, and at what point, he might use weapons of mass destruction to force Ukraine to capitulate. His spokesman said earlier in the day that after the annexation of the four regions — a move that virtually no other country is expected to recognize — an attack on those regions would be treated as an attack on Russia.

Without saying so directly, Mr. Putin hinted that the role of nuclear weapons in war is on his mind. Describing the West as "deceitful and hypocritical through and through," Mr. Putin noted that the United States was the only country to have used nuclear weapons in war. He then added: "By the way, they created a precedent."

Mr. Putin was appealing to three key audiences. To Russians, he sought to justify the expanding hardship his war has been causing by insisting they were fighting for their survival. To the West, he worked to telegraph his determination that he was unbowed by sanctions or arms deliveries to Ukraine, and would keep fighting — with the veiled threat of Russia's enormous nuclear arsenal in the background.

And to the rest of the world, Mr. Putin sought to cast himself as the leader of a global movement against the "Western racists" he claimed were imposing American hegemony. The West, he claimed, had not changed from the centuries past in which it brutally colonized other countries and fought wars to gain economic advantage.

Western countries, he insisted, had "no moral right" to condemn the annexation of parts of Ukraine.

"The Western elites remain colonizers as they always were," Mr. Putin said. "They have divided the world into their vassals — the so-called civilized countries — and everyone else."

As Mr. Putin spoke, a crowd gathered on Red Square for the concert and rally. Russian media reported that Moscow universities had directed students to attend. Pro-Kremlin pop music performers belted out nationalist songs from a stage that said "Russia!" and was flanked with banners reading "Choice of the people!" and "Together forever!"

	<p>At one point, a young woman in an orange sweatshirt took the stage, describing herself as a volunteer helping people in Russian-occupied Ukraine. Her husband had been drafted a week ago, she said.</p> <p>“I’m not moping and will wait for him and support him,” she said. Appearing to hold back tears, she added: “I call on you, women: support your husbands, sons and fathers. Everything will be OK.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 World leaders rally as US warns Putin
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/30/us/biden-putin-russia-ukraine.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — President Biden condemned Russia’s claimed annexation of captured Ukrainian territory on Friday, responding to Moscow’s latest escalation with a range of sanctions and a warning to President Vladimir V. Putin that the United States would defend “every single inch” of NATO territory from a potential attack.</p> <p>Hours after Mr. Putin gave a speech asserting Russian control over four eastern Ukrainian regions, Mr. Biden called the action a “fraudulent” violation of international law that showed “contempt for peaceful nations everywhere.”</p> <p>“The United States is never going to recognize this, and quite frankly the world is not going to recognize it either,” Mr. Biden said from the White House. “He can’t seize his neighbor’s territory and get away with it. It is as simple as that.”</p> <p>World leaders rallied around Mr. Biden in a forceful collective denunciation of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>President Emmanuel Macron of France said Russia had committed a “serious violation of international law and Ukrainian sovereignty” and vowed on Twitter to help Ukraine “recover its full sovereignty over its entire territory.”</p> <p>Jens Stoltenberg, NATO’s secretary general, called Mr. Putin’s move “an illegal and illegitimate land grab” and pledged to continue assisting Ukraine until it defeated the aggressor.</p> <p>Even among Russia’s traditional allies, no country stepped forward to recognize the annexation. Uzbekistan, a former Soviet republic in Central Asia, issued a statement before Mr. Putin’s speech calling for “respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the noninterference in the internal affairs of other states.”</p> <p>President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine responded to Russia’s claims by announcing that he was fast-tracking his country’s application to NATO. In a video, he accused the Kremlin of trying to “steal something that does not belong to it.”</p> <p>“Ukraine will not allow that,” he said.</p> <p>But Mr. Zelensky’s request to join the alliance drew a less resounding response.</p> <p>“Right now, our view is that the best way for us to support Ukraine is through practical, on-the-ground support in Ukraine,” said Jake Sullivan, Mr. Biden’s national security adviser.</p> <p>The Biden administration’s new sanctions aim to further cripple Russia’s defense and technology sectors and other industries, and cut off more top officials and their families from global commerce. Those officials include two governors of Russia’s central bank.</p>

But with Russia already under massive Western sanctions, the measures may be less consequential than the administration's effort to isolate Moscow globally with a fresh appeal to nations that have not chosen a clear side in the conflict.

"I urge all members of the international community to reject Russia's illegal attempts at annexation and to stand with the people of Ukraine for as long as it takes," Mr. Biden said in a statement.

Mr. Biden's warning to Mr. Putin comes amid strong suspicion by U.S. officials that Russia was responsible for apparent sabotage to the Nord Stream natural gas pipelines running between Russia and Germany. The damage occurred near NATO countries in the Baltic Sea but in international waters.

Mr. Sullivan told reporters at the White House that the United States had "elevated our surveillance and monitoring of critical infrastructure in NATO territory."

U.S. officials have also long worried that Mr. Putin could escalate the war with a conventional military strike against sites in Eastern European countries like Poland and Romania, both NATO allies, that serve as transit points for weapons into Ukraine, or with cyberattacks.

The new round of sanctions fulfills longtime vows by the Biden administration to punish any move by Russia to annex captured Ukrainian territory. But the United States [has struggled to expand its coalition](#) of nations aiding Ukraine, and several world powers, notably China and India, have maintained [strategic partnerships](#) with Russia and continue to enrich Moscow with energy purchases.

That could change if Mr. Putin decides to make more explicit his threats to use nuclear weapons. Mr. Putin has said Russia will take any measures available to protect its territory, and some analysts have said he might apply that threat against Ukrainian military actions in the areas he has illegally annexed. Mr. Biden has forcefully warned Mr. Putin against using nuclear weapons, and some aides say they hope other world leaders are conveying the same message to Moscow.

After Mr. Putin referred ominously in his address to the use of nuclear weapons, Mr. Sullivan told reporters that "there is a risk, given all of the loose talk and the nuclear saber-rattling by Putin," that he might consider a nuclear strike. Analysts say that would probably take the form of a relatively small tactical nuclear weapon, either on the battlefield or as a warning shot in an unpopulated area.

Despite Mr. Putin's latest move, the Biden administration is still holding back from the dramatic step of imposing sanctions on [international purchases of Russian energy](#). U.S. officials are wary of sending energy prices soaring higher, especially just ahead of midterm congressional elections and as Europeans grow frustrated over home energy costs. Officials from the Group of 7 nations have been [discussing a price cap](#) on purchases of Russian oil but have not agreed on how to implement one.

The United States and major European nations have announced boycotts of Russian oil and gas. But higher energy prices since Mr. Putin's invasion have boosted profits for Russian companies and the central government. Besides China and India, other nations [have increased](#) their purchases of Russian oil over last year, including Turkey, a NATO member.

U.S. officials say they hope that even if those countries do not formally endorse a price cap on Russian oil, all buyers can use a cap to negotiate much lower prices, which would drain Russia of revenue.

The sanctions announced on Friday added more names to the long lists of Russian officials, companies and institutions that U.S. agencies have penalized in the first weeks of the war.

The Treasury Department said that it was enacting sanctions against 14 Russian executives and firms and international companies, including ones in China, Armenia and Belarus, for supplying the Russian military.

“This action sends a clear message that international suppliers of sanctioned Russian entities and Russia’s defense sector run the risk of being sanctioned,” Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said in a statement.

The Commerce Department added 57 entities from Russia and the Crimea region of Ukraine, which the Russian military forcibly occupied in 2014, to what it calls the entity list, aimed at severely limiting commercial transactions. U.S. officials said they would try to ensure that business between foreign companies and those on the list is restricted. The Commerce Department now has 392 entities linked to Russia on the list.

Since the winter, the Biden administration has steadily announced travel and economic penalties against many Russian political elites, but it targeted more of them on Friday. The State Department imposed visa restrictions on more than 900 Russian officials. And the Treasury Department is putting nearly 300 members of the Parliament on a sanctions list.

Treasury officials also named several other prominent figures being added to the list: Elvira Sakhpizadovna Nabiullina, the governor of the Central Bank of Russia; Olga Nikolaevna Skorobogatova, the first deputy governor of the bank; Aleksandr Valentinovich Nova, a deputy prime minister; and relatives of members of Russia’s National Security Council. U.S. agencies had already put members of the security council on lists.

The move against Ms. Nabiullina could be a sign that U.S. officials are struggling to find new and meaningful targets of sanctions short of the international energy market. Ms. Nabiullina has been praised by international economists and bankers for her policymaking, and some U.S. officials had been reluctant to put her on a sanctions list.

Daniel Tannebaum, a former Treasury official and a partner at Oliver Wyman, a management consulting firm, said the penalties announced Friday are unlikely to change Mr. Putin’s calculus. “I don’t think it’s necessarily going to move the needle in terms of tightening the screws on Russia,” he said.

The Biden administration offered a resolution at the United Nations Security Council on Friday condemning the Russian territorial claim. Russia vetoed the measure, and U.S. officials said they planned to bring the measure before the full U.N. next week.

For months, U.S. officials have been analyzing statements from major countries that have remained neutral on the Ukraine war, or are aligned with Moscow, for any signs of daylight between them and Russia.

At the start of a meeting at a summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, last month, Mr. Putin acknowledged that President Xi Jinping of China had “questions and concerns” about the war. And U.S. officials say Beijing, the most powerful partner of Moscow, has refrained from giving material aid to Russia for the war.

But the officials also say they do not see a break in that strategic partnership.

“The Chinese are maintaining their line,” said Evan Medeiros, a Georgetown University professor who was senior Asia director on the National Security Council under President Barack Obama. “And the Biden administration knows Beijing won’t carry any water for them on Russia.”

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HEADLINE	10/01 Russia detains Ukraine nuclear plant chief
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/01/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#russia-has-detained-the-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plants-director-general-its-operator-says
GIST	Russia detained the director general of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant on Friday, and his location was not known, the company that operates the plant said in a statement.

The site's director general, Igor Murashov, is responsible for nuclear and radiation safety, according to the statement from Energoatom, the Ukrainian national energy company. His detention poses a threat to the facility's operation, the company added.

The plant was taken by Russian forces in March but is run by Ukrainian engineers. [Fighting near the nuclear plant](#), Europe's largest, has raised international concern about an accident. Shelling has at times caused the plant to be disconnected from Ukraine's power grid, which Ukraine's energy minister has said put critical cooling systems at risk of relying solely on emergency backup power.

The car that Mr. Murashov was in was stopped on the road leading to the plant around 4 p.m., and he was blindfolded and taken to an unknown location, the statement said.

Energoatom called on Russia to return Mr. Murashov and urged nuclear security officials including Rafael Mariano Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to work on his release.

The agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, has had two inspectors at the plant since September. It said in a [statement](#) Friday that there had been a series of land mine explosions near the plant in recent days that was jeopardizing safety and security at the facility.

The latest blast, the sixth reported in a week, damaged a low-voltage cable outside the fence perimeter, according to the agency. The explosion was close to a nitrogen-oxygen facility and indirectly damaged a voltage transformer at one of the reactors, the statement said. Earlier in the week, [the agency said](#) the land mines appeared to have been set off by animals.

Both Ukrainian and Russian military forces have accused each other of using the specter of nuclear disaster in brinkmanship in the war by waging attacks around the plant. Mr. Grossi said in a statement that he was continuing efforts to establish a security zone around the nuclear plant.

The nuclear agency did not immediately comment on Mr. Murashov.

The plant is in the region of Zaporizhzhia, which is part of the area of eastern and southern Ukraine that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia moved to illegally annex on Friday.

Ukrainian officials have noted the [fatigue and stress of Ukrainian control room employees](#), saying that Russian soldiers have subjected them to harsh interrogations, including torture with electrical shocks, suspecting them of sabotage or of informing the Ukrainian military about activities at the plant.

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HEADLINE	10/01 Ukraine closer to strategic eastern rail hub
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/01/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#ukraine-moves-to-encircle-lyman-a-strategic-eastern-rail-hub
GIST	<p>RIVNE, Ukraine — Ukrainian troops inched closer to recapturing the strategic eastern city of Lyman on Saturday, just a day after President Vladimir V. Putin's internationally derided declaration that the region where it lies and three others in Ukraine were now part of Russia.</p> <p>The battle for Lyman, a city in Donetsk Province with a pre-war population of 20,000, has quickly turned into a poorly timed sideshow for the Kremlin after it illegally declared its annexation of swaths of Ukraine and Kyiv's stunning victories in the country's northeast last month.</p> <p>The city's position on the banks of the Siverskyi Donets river means its capture by Ukrainian forces would lend them a strategic foothold for further advances east. It also would put additional pressure on the Kremlin, which has been facing blowback at home over its setbacks on the battlefield and the conscription of hundreds of thousands of men to fight in Ukraine.</p>

Much remains unclear about the unfolding situation on the ground in Lyman as Ukrainian commanders there are barred from discussing the ongoing battle to the media. But Ukrainian and pro-Russian officials, pro-Russian social media accounts and unverified photos show that Ukraine's forces clearly have the upper hand.

Denis Pushilin, the leader of Russia's proxy administration in the Donetsk People's Republic, said on Friday that the town was "half encircled."

"This is very unpleasant news, but we must look soberly at the situation and draw conclusions from our mistakes," he said. Mr. Pushilin also said on Telegram that Russia had lost control of Yampil and Dobryshev, villages north and east of Lyman.

On Friday night, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine thanked the military units responsible for seizing Yampil and hinted at the progress in Lyman.

"We have substantial results in the east of our country," Mr. Zelensky said. "There is already enough public information about this. Everyone has heard what is happening in Lyman, Donetsk region."

Pro-Russian bloggers reported with growing alarm on Saturday that their side was facing a stinging defeat. One popular account on the Telegram messaging app said that Lyman was "practically surrounded by the enemy." Another predicted that the town would "be completely lost in the next 1-3 days." And a third said that sources "do not rule out the abandonment" of Lyman by Russian troops in order to avoid encirclement.

For Russia, the new setback came at a particularly sensitive moment: less than 24 hours after Mr. Putin on Friday delivered his most fiery speech of the war, one that cast Russia's invasion of Ukraine as part of an existential conflict with the West.

Russia had to keep Ukraine from taking Lyman as "a matter of principle," a nationalist commentator, Yegor Kholmogorov, wrote. "Any retreat will look like a bad omen against the backdrop of yesterday's events in Moscow."

Ukrainian officials believe that there are more than 1,000 Russian troops defending Lyman, and the fall of the two villages east and west of Lyman means that Ukrainian forces are close to directly threatening the Russian supply routes that flow east out of the city.

If Russian forces do not retreat and the routes out of Lyman are severed, Ukrainian forces will have successfully surrounded the city.

For the Kremlin, having Russian troops trapped within Lyman would be a public relations nightmare. And for the Ukrainians, it would be a form of payback for the encirclement and defeat of their troops in the southern city of Mariupol earlier in the war.

Lyman, which fell to the Russians in May, serves as a rail hub that flows into Donbas, the mineral rich region comprised of Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk Province that has long been the focus of Mr. Putin's war aims.

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HEADLINE	09/30 Indigenous leaders call for accountability
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/community/facing-race/national-day-of-remembrance-for-indian-boarding-schools/281-8c586131-39b8-4a47-a074-cbddd4c34be8d
GIST	SUQUAMISH, Wash. — On the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools , Northwest Indigenous leaders called for more accountability for the atrocities inflicted on Native people for decades at residential facilities.

“Despite the trauma of that, many were able to go on and really lead our people, but then had to persevere through that process of losing their language and having that disconnection from their family and their tribes over time, over a very important formative part of their life,” said Leonard Forsman, chairman of the Suquamish Tribe.

Up until the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Native American children were forcibly removed from their homes and placed in government-run boarding schools. The goal was the systemic destruction of Native culture and communities, experts have said.

Forsman wants more accountability and awareness about the generational trauma still affecting Indigenous communities.

“There's a big schism in our generational passing on of knowledge and also parenting skills and things like that were lost,” Forsman said. “So, if you just imagine your own community to go home tonight and know all your kids are gone from around age five to 13 at least, are gone for nine months, at least nine months, and not allowed to come back.”

Many children suffered physical and sexual abuse. The federal government is now involved in identifying dozens of unmarked mass burial sites that have been uncovered across the United States and Canada.

A recent federal report identified more than 400 schools in the United States that were created to assimilate Indigenous children into white society. Fifteen were identified in Washington state.

Forsman said congressional action is in the works that could create a truth and healing commission on boarding schools.

“I hate to say we look forward to it because it's painful,” Forsman said. “But I think we look forward to there being more transparency, and us being able to identify and relate to it and then work on trying to start the healing process for our people.”

The U.S. Interior report has made recommendations to invest in language preservation, which was also lost to many because of the forced move.

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HEADLINE	09/30 WA minimum wage will increase to \$15.74
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/business/already-double-federal-rate-wa-minimum-wage-will-increase-to-15-74/
GIST	<p>Washington state's minimum wage will increase to \$15.74 an hour in January, up \$1.25 from the current rate.</p> <p>Announcing the increase Friday, state labor officials said the 8.66% increase reflects rising costs of housing, food, medical care and other expenses as reflected in the Consumer Price Index. Washington Department of Labor and Industries calculates the minimum wage for the coming year based on federal estimates of price increases.</p> <p>The state minimum wage applies to workers age 16 and older. Under state law, employers can pay 85% of the minimum wage to workers ages 14-15. For 2023, the wage for that younger group will be \$13.38 per hour.</p> <p>Cities can set minimum wages higher than the state. For 2022, Seattle's minimum wage is \$17.27 an hour for most workers. SeaTac's is \$17.54. The federal minimum hourly wage, unchanged since 2009, is \$7.25.</p> <p>L&I has also calculated new minimum salary requirements for managers and other employees who are exempt from overtime rules. The 2023 minimum salary for overtime-exempt employees working for employers with 50 or fewer workers is \$57,293.60 a year, or is 1.75 times what a full-time minimum wage worker earns. The minimum salary is \$65,478.40 a year for larger employers.</p>

Since 2020, the department has been incrementally increasing overtime pay rates, which are expected to reach 2.5 times regular pay in 2028. The pace of the increase is based on the size of the employer.

Minimum pay rules for rideshare drivers, one of the protections included in [legislation passed earlier this year, also go into effect Jan. 1](#). The rate varies by location; for trips within Seattle, drivers will earn 64 cents per passenger minute and \$1.50 per passenger mile, or \$5.62 a trip, whichever is greater.

Employers or workers can find more information on wage laws and make complaints on the [L&I website](#), lni.wa.gov, or by calling 360-902-5316 or 1-866-219-7321.

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HEADLINE	09/30 Federal Way cops 2017 shooting justified
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/federal-way-officers-were-justified-in-2017-car-wash-shooting-inquest-jury-finds/
GIST	<p>A King County coroner's inquest jury on Friday unanimously found the fatal shooting of Robert Lightfeather by Federal Way police in 2017 was lawful, justified and within the city's deadly force and de-escalation policies.</p> <p>The seven-man, one-woman jury deliberated less than three hours before returning to find that Federal Way Officers Austin Rogers and Tyler Turpin acted in self-defense and in defense of the public when they shot and killed Lightfeather, who had pointed a gun at another man and the officers at the Pink Elephant Car Wash on Pacific Highway South.</p> <p>The jury unanimously found that Rogers was justified when he fired 14 rounds at Lightfeather, who collapsed to the pavement with seven gunshot wounds, four of which would have been nearly instantly fatal. Turpin, who is no longer employed by Federal Way, also fired his weapon, but the jury could not decide whether any of his rounds struck Lightfeather. Forensic evidence was inconclusive, and several of the rounds were never recovered.</p> <p>The jury also couldn't decide whether Turpin verbally warned Lightfeather before opening fire, as the officer testified he didn't recall if he shouted a warning while moving toward cover after Lightfeather pointed a gun at him.</p> <p>Rogers said he didn't have time to order Lightfeather to drop the gun as Lightfeather turned to him and racked the slide of a handgun as Rogers was climbing out of his patrol car.</p> <p>The jurors' findings diverged on just two of the inquest administrator's 43 questions, based on four days of testimony. Three of the jurors said it was "unknown" whether Lightfeather dropped his gun on command; the other five jurors said he did not.</p> <p>Five of the jurors said it would have been feasible for the officers to issue a verbal warning before shooting him. All eight said it was "unknown" whether such a warning was issued.</p> <p>Lightfeather's family did not attend the inquest, saying they did not want to be further traumatized by having to relive painful memories. In a statement to the jury, the family described Lightfeather as a funny, kind husband and father of two.</p> <p>The family's attorney, Teri Rogers Kemp, declined to comment on the verdict until she had time to review the jury's responses and discuss the verdict with the family.</p> <p>According to testimony, Lightfeather was intoxicated when he pulled his vehicle into the car wash parking lot, apparently to tell two other men that their car was smoking and appeared to be overheating. Witnesses said the men were drinking for about 20 minutes when Lightfeather produced a handgun and pointed it at one of the men.</p>

A passerby called 911, and Rogers and Turpin — both of whom had been in the area — responded within minutes. Turpin testified that Lightfeather pointed the gun at him and that he was scrambling to get behind his patrol car as Rogers pulled up behind him.

Rogers testified that Lightfeather immediately turned to him and raised a handgun in his left hand, racking the slide back with his right. Rogers said he opened fire within seconds and never had time to say anything.

“It happened so fast,” he testified Thursday. “By the time I was out of my vehicle he was pointing a gun at me. There was no real alternative to stop this male from pointing a gun at me. Deadly force was the only option.”

Dr. Timothy Williams, a King County Medical Examiner’s Office pathologist, said toxicology tests showed Lightfeather’s blood alcohol level was measured at 0.24%, three times the level required to prove legal intoxication.

Rogers was the final witness in the third King County inquest held since the Washington Supreme Court [unanimously turned aside challenges by several King County police agencies](#), including Federal Way, to an expanded inquest process. The county is unique in Washington and a rarity in the U.S. in that its charter requires a coroner’s jury to review the facts, circumstances and possible criminality involved in any law-enforcement related death of a citizen.

The county halted inquests in 2018 to revise the process to make it more transparent and accessible to the families of people killed by police and to address historical racial discrimination and pro-police biases that had emerged from the process in the 1960s and ’70s.

There’s a backup of 56 pending inquests, as a result. In roughly half of those cases, jurors will be asked to weigh the officer’s actions against a state police deadly force statute that, up until it was changed in 2019, makes it virtually impossible for jurors to seek criminal charges against an officer. Rogers’ and Turpin’s actions were reviewed under the provisions of the old statute.

Inquests juries convened for the prior two proceedings — involving the Seattle Police Department’s fatal 2017 shootings of [Damarius Butts](#) and [Charleena Lyles](#) — found the officers in both circumstances were justified in using deadly force.

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HEADLINE	09/30 Seattle mayor’s texts manually deleted
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/more-durkan-texts-were-deleted-filing-says-accusing-seattle-of-spoilation-of-evidence/
GIST	<p>More text messages than previously known were deleted from then-Mayor Jenny Durkan’s phone in the months after Seattle’s 2020 racial justice protests, and those additional texts — nearly 200 of them — were deleted manually, according to a new forensic report. The report also says the texts of several other key officials were destroyed through phone resets clustered within the same month.</p> <p>The report was contained in a filing this week from business owners and residents suing the city over damages allegedly incurred during June 2020’s weekslong Capitol Hill Organized Protest. The only plausible explanation for the loss of so many texts, including many after the CHOP litigation began that summer, according to the filing: “These officials intended to deprive Plaintiffs of crucial evidence.”</p> <p>The filing by the plaintiffs, including Hunters Capital, Madrona Real Estate Services and Bergman’s Lock and Key Services, accuses City Hall of “spoliation of evidence” and asks the judge in the federal court case to impose sanctions by finding the city liable for the allegations in the case or at least by advising a future jury to infer spoliation.</p>

It's the latest twist in a serpentine saga that emerged in the wake of Seattle's controversial handling of the protests, roiled the last months of Durkan's tenure and could yet prove costly for taxpayers, depending on what happens in court.

Had they been retained, the lost texts might shed more light on how the city was controversially run at a historic moment. Durkan didn't seek reelection last year and was replaced by current Mayor Bruce Harrell.

City Attorney Ann Davison's office responded with court filings of its own this week, [accusing](#) some of the plaintiffs themselves of deleting their own texts about CHOP. The city [is asking](#) the judge to toss out the case based on multiple points, including the argument that City Hall sought to de-escalate the CHOP rather than neglecting it.

In a statement, a spokesperson for Durkan said the former mayor "believes strongly in the public's right to know what their government is doing" and called the new filing by the plaintiffs "a purposely inaccurate and misplaced 'Hail Mary' attempt to save a case that lacks merit." The judge earlier declined to designate the lawsuit as a class action and some plaintiffs have left the case.

Durkan's texts were [initially disclosed](#) as missing to the public by whistleblowers in her office in early 2021, and new information has emerged in bits since then. In July, King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg [asked](#) Sheriff Patti Cole-Tindall to put together an investigation into the matter. Cole-Tindall's office said it had no update to share earlier this week.

Under public records law and legal rules, certain texts must be preserved. Anyone who willfully destroys a public record that's supposed to be kept is guilty of a felony under state law, punishable by up to five years in prison and \$1,000 fine.

A previous forensic analysis, commissioned by City Hall in response to lawsuits over how officials managed the June 2020 protests and released [this February](#), indicated that Durkan's phone was set in July 2020 to [automatically delete](#) texts after 30 days, resulting in the loss of thousands of messages from the preceding months. That analysis, which cost taxpayers more than \$400,000, indicated that Durkan's phone had also been set to delete texts stored in the cloud.

The Seattle Times [reported](#) more than a year ago that texts from [a number of other officials](#) in addition to Durkan, including the city's police and fire chiefs, were missing or not yet recovered from the same crucial period, when police deployed tear gas against protest crowds and abandoned the East Precinct on Capitol Hill.

At the time, the city attorney's office said texts were missing from Durkan, then-police Chief Carmen Best, fire Chief Harold Scoggins, assistant police chief Eric Greening, police chief strategy officer Chris Fisher, emergency operations official Kenneth Neafcy and public utilities official Idris Beauregard.

The new forensic report adds to the picture. In addition to 5,746 of Durkan's texts destroyed by the 30-day automatic deletions prior to June 25, 2020, the report says 191 more were lost later, between June 25 and Nov. 16 that year. It says those were lost due to manual deletions, rather than the 30-day setting. And it says the phones of multiple other officials who were involved with the protests, across several city departments, were each reset in October 2020.

The report says 27,138 texts were deleted from Best's phone and 15,843 from Fisher's phone from periods including the summer of 2020. It notes a cluster of factory resets, which wipe away data, on the phones of key officials over a span of weeks: Scoggins on Oct. 8, Beauregard on Oct. 9, Greening on Oct. 26 and Neafcy on Oct. 27.

Best has said in a deposition that she periodically deleted her texts. The city has said the factory resets were needed because the officials were "locked out" of their phones, due to passcodes or other problems.

Neither forensic analysis sought to determine who deleted the texts from Durkan's phone. Durkan has said she did not delete her texts and that most of her deleted texts have since been reproduced from other phones. She has said problems arose with her phone after she dropped it in a tidepool on a Fourth of July holiday.

Durkan's spokesperson described the texts that have been recovered as "mostly innocuous and irrelevant" and also "wholly consistent" with her public statements at the time

But texts between the key officials haven't been recovered, and the new forensic report by Leatha Consulting LLC for the plaintiffs in the CHOP lawsuit says the deletions "each resulted in a loss of text messages that the City had an obligation to preserve" and says technology problems could have been resolved without resetting phones and losing texts.

Durkan has directed responsibility at the city's information technology department, noting the department configured a new phone for her on July 9, 2020, in the period during which her text-retention setting was changed to 30 days.

But the city department has said it's not its practice to change retention settings, and both forensic analyses have identified July 4, 2020, as the date when her phone was set to delete texts stored in the cloud; Durkan has said in a deposition that no one else handled her phone that day.

Best, who retired from her position in September 2020, didn't immediately comment Friday. Davison's office declined to comment.

In May, City Hall settled a public records lawsuit filed by The Seattle Times over the missing text messages for nearly \$200,000.

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Report: When and how Seattle officials' texts were deleted

Businesses and residents suing Seattle over the Capitol Hill Organized Protest hired an expert to analyze when and how thousands of text messages went missing from the phones of city leaders in 2020. A forensic report by the expert, filed by the plaintiffs in court this week, includes the timeline below.



Source: Expert report by Brandon Leathe in *Hunters Capital, et al. v. City of Seattle*

FRANK MINA/THE SEATTLE TIMES

HEADLINE	10/01 Victim? Activists, TPD disagree at protest
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article265692016.html
GIST	Two stories have emerged about what happened at a Tacoma street protest last month where a community organizer was hit by a car, according to interviews and police records obtained by The News Tribune.

In one version, the injured organizer is the victim of a hit-and-run that a police officer witnessed but didn't investigate. In the other, the organizer obstructed traffic then punched the driver of the car in what police characterized as an assault.

City prosecutors have declined to press charges against the driver or the organizer, but the case has highlighted a rift between some advocates for the city's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) community and Tacoma police.

"We don't have a relationship with the police, and it's because of things like this," Tacoma Action Coalition co-founder and spokesperson Jamika Scott told The News Tribune. "They cannot be trusted. They do not see themselves as peacekeepers and mediators in the community. They see themselves as people who wield power."

The Tacoma Action Collective, or TAC, is an organization focused on confronting systemic racism and excessive use of force by police. Founded after the 2014 fatal police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, TAC developed a larger following in the wake of the killings of George Floyd and, locally, Manuel Ellis.

It was an organizer associated with TAC who suffered a sprained wrist and other injuries after reaching inside the car Aug. 14 at a Hilltop intersection.

TAC didn't sponsor the demonstration, but the group drew attention to the collision by posting video the day after. The police department began looking into the case two days later.

Tacoma police officials declined to respond to criticisms from TAC about how officers handled the case. The Tacoma Police Union also declined to comment and said interviews with the officers involved would require the police chief's approval.

City spokesperson Maria Lee told The News Tribune via email that police department leadership "always welcomes the opportunity to (meet with TAC) as it would broaden and deepen community conversations around public safety."

RECORDS DETAIL HILLTOP PROTEST INCIDENT

Surveillance footage from St. Joseph Medical Center provided to The News Tribune through a public records request shows about a dozen demonstrators attempting to stop traffic at South 19th Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Way just before 1:30 p.m. on Aug. 14.

The group danced and chanted for about two and a half minutes, with people shifting to plug spaces where several cars zipped through, some very close to the pedestrians.

The demonstration was part of a larger community event sponsored by Truth Movement Innertainment that started with an informational walk embarking from McCarver Park and ending with food, music and community resources in People's Park.

Development of the Hilltop in recent years has displaced historically Black residents and businesses, and demonstrators sought to make a point by "taking up space" in communal areas, including the intersection where they stopped traffic, according to the event organizer.

The driver who would later be at the center of a police investigation was stopped in her Subaru when she heard protesters yelling about "equity" and "freedom," she later told detectives. She was on her way to a Sunday afternoon appointment.

After the car in front of her flipped around and with a green light ahead, the Subaru drove into the intersection, video recorded from a tower on St. Joseph Medical Center shows.

One of the event organizers, who uses they/them pronouns, hopped to the side to block the Subaru and backpedaled a few steps when it didn't stop.

Arms outstretched, the organizer bent forward when the car made impact, video shows. They braced against the hood of the car as it stopped briefly and then drove forward again.

The organizer then walked from the front of the car to the driver's open window and reached inside, video shows. The organizer ran alongside the Subaru with their arm inside as the car accelerated through the remainder of the intersection.

The separate video posted by TAC, which was recorded by one of the demonstrators in the intersection, shows the driver gripping the wrist of the organizer who was hit.

Sgt. Jeffrey "J.R." Smith happened upon the protest while on patrol and watched the incident unfold from inside his patrol vehicle on the other side of the intersection behind three other cars, according to the TAC video, which was shared with Tacoma police and provided to The News Tribune in a records request.

"We have a group of protesters, 19th and MLK, that are obstructing traffic. Can I get units here, please?" Smith said over the radio, according to recordings provided to The News Tribune.

"Just send everybody here. We have an assault in progress now. I need priority," Smith said over the radio.

Smith said in a body-worn camera recording that the organizer punched the driver of the Subaru, according to police documents.

"Same subject has now assaulted multiple people," Smith added shortly thereafter.

Surveillance footage showed the organizer punch the closed passenger window of an SUV that followed behind the Subaru that hit them.

After the struggle between the motorist and organizer, Smith drove his police SUV toward the intersection, according to police records.

Because the Subaru immediately drove away, Smith told other officers sent to the scene that there were no victims to interview, according to dispatch records. Smith told other officers they would have probable cause to arrest the organizer if the motorist returned, according to investigative documents that cite audio from his body-worn camera.

Multiple patrol cars followed as the group of demonstrators then walked in the northbound lanes of Martin Luther King Jr. Way, according to police records and video footage. Tacoma police sometimes block traffic to keep protesters safe from cars if resources allow, according to spokesperson Wendy Haddow.

Smith told other officers he wanted to make sure the demonstrators "don't assault anybody else," according to radio recordings.

When a dispatcher asked what the group was protesting, Smith replied, "They're shouting Black lives matter. I think it's Manny Ellis-related, but I'm not entirely certain," according to radio recordings.

The police sergeant did not write any formal reports about the incident, records show.

TACOMA DETECTIVE FOLLOWS UP

TAC posted the video a demonstrator recorded the following day, Aug. 15. Scott, the TAC leader, said the group shared the footage online in hopes of identifying the driver for insurance purposes and thought police might follow up on the case.

Two days later, the video drew the attention of Haddow, the department spokesperson, who shared it with police top brass.

Later on the morning of Aug. 17, the department announced it was “looking into” the incident. A detective got the case the next day, Aug. 18.

A 911 recording from Aug. 18 provided to The News Tribune shows the organizer said police could come to their workplace for an interview that day. They reported the incident as a hit-and-run.

The detective, Ryan Larsen, called the organizer shortly after the 911 call, according to police documents.

The organizer told Larsen they received treatment for a sprained wrist at the hospital due to the Subaru driver holding it as the car continued moving, according to police documents. They said they reached inside in an attempt to stop the car.

Larsen wrote that the organizer admitted to punching the driver, “but only after she hit me with the car,” police documents show.

The organizer, a 24-year-old Black activist, later told The News Tribune that wasn’t a fair characterization of their comments. They requested anonymity due to fear of harassment.

“I said, ‘I struggled to get out of her hands,’” according to the organizer. Prior to speaking with police, the organizer described the incident and their injuries, which required a splint and sling, to The News Tribune last month.

During the police interview, they said the detective asked leading questions.

“Just right off the bat, it was very clear that they were trying to paint me in the wrong,” the organizer told The News Tribune.

The organizer did not show up for a recorded, in-person interview at police headquarters the next day, Larsen wrote.

On the phone, the detective said he would read the organizer their constitutional rights beforehand. The reference to a “Miranda warning” indicated to the organizer’s lawyer that police might take them into custody, and he advised them not to go to police headquarters, according to the organizer.

Lee, the city spokesperson, told The News Tribune that officers are required to “Mirandize” people held in custody or questioned in relation to a crime. They might also do so to protect the civil rights of someone who has said or might say something incriminating.

“It would not be typical to Mirandize a victim of a crime unless there are facts known to the officer leading them to believe the victim may incriminate themselves by their statements,” Lee wrote in an email.

The organizer said the detective did not contact them again.

The following week, the driver, a white, 74-year-old Federal Way woman, responded to a message left at her home by Larsen, according to police documents. The woman told Larsen that the organizer ran out in front of her car, “bumped” the front end and tried to reach for the steering wheel while cursing at her. The driver said she tried to pull the organizer’s wrists away from the wheel, then the organizer yanked her hand into the partially open car window and punched her in the side of the face.

The driver told Larsen that the side of her face turned red and the back of her left hand was sore but that she suffered no bruising.

The woman’s name is redacted in police documents, and The News Tribune was not able to reach her.

Larsen watched video footage from St. Joseph Medical Center three days later, records show.

In his synopsis, the detective wrote that the car and the organizer made “light contact” and the organizer appeared to lose their balance. He also noted that demonstrators did not approach police vehicles at the scene.

In comments to The News Tribune a week prior, TAC criticized responding police officers for not interviewing the demonstrators.

The organizer who was hit told The News Tribune they felt the collision was obvious to police at the scene. “The last thing I wanted to talk to was a cop after one of them just watched it happen,” the organizer said during an interview last month.

On Aug. 30, the driver called Larsen again to say the incident frightened her and she was just trying to get out of the area when she drove away, according to police documents. Larsen said he was preparing to submit his investigation for a charging review, and the driver replied that she would cooperate with any prosecution of the person who punched her.

DISTRUST HEIGHTENED

The organizer who was hit by the car told The News Tribune they felt disregarded at each step they took to get help.

“I’m the person who got hit. I reached out to you and now you’re investigating me,” they added later. “It makes me absolutely sick.” Scott, the TAC leader, told The News Tribune she called Mayor Victoria Woodards after learning police might arrest the organizer.

Scott, who wasn’t at the protest but knows the person who was hit, wanted to be sure city officials were aware of the case.

The mayor told her Police Chief Avery Moore offered assurances the investigation would be handled properly, according to Scott. In response to an inquiry about the discussion between Woodards and Moore, Lee, the city spokesperson, wrote in an email that the mayor “has requested high level updates” about the case.

Woodards also gave Scott the police chief’s phone number and encouraged her to call him, according to Scott. She said she didn’t feel the need to rehash her concerns with Moore. Other times she’s weighed in on police decision-making, Scott said, she’s felt her advocacy didn’t impact the outcome.

She said TAC members also have participated in community-engagement efforts focused on policing at the request of city officials but walked away feeling unheard and used.

“We have been in conversation with city officials, with police leaders, and nothing has changed,” Scott said. “The system needs to reach out to us and show us that it’s changed, or at least that it’s trying.”

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Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	09/30 Using open source software, fake job offers
SOURCE	https://www.zdnet.com/article/microsoft-hackers-using-open-source-software-and-fake-jobs-in-phishing-attacks/
GIST	Microsoft is warning that hackers are using open source software and bogus social media accounts to dupe software engineers and IT support staff with fake job offers that in reality lead to malware attacks.

A phishing-happy hacking crew linked to North Korea's armed forces has been using trojanized open-source apps and LinkedIn recruitment bait to hit tech industry employees, according to threat analysts from Microsoft's advanced persistent threat (APT) research group.

The Microsoft Threat Intelligence Center (MSTIC, pronounced 'Mystic') has seen the group using PuTTY, KiTTY, TightVNC, Sumatra PDF Reader, and the muPDF/Subliminal Recording software installer for these attack since late April, [according to MSTIC's blogpost](#).

The hacking group has targeted employees in media, defense and aerospace, and IT services in the US, UK, India, and Russia. The group was also behind the [massive attack on Sony Pictures Entertainment in 2014](#).

Also known as [Lazarus](#), and tracked by Microsoft as ZINC, Google Cloud's Mandiant threat analysts [saw the group](#) spear-phishing targets in the tech and media sectors with bogus job offers in July, using WhatsApp to share a trojanized instance of PuTTY.

"Microsoft researchers have observed spear-phishing as a primary tactic of ZINC actors, but they have also been observed using strategic website compromises and social engineering across social media to achieve their objectives," [MSTIC notes](#).

"ZINC targets employees of companies it's attempting to infiltrate and seeks to coerce these individuals into installing seemingly benign programs or opening weaponized documents that contain malicious macros. Targeted attacks have also been carried out [against security researchers](#) over Twitter and LinkedIn."

The group engages in espionage, data theft, hacking crypto exchanges and banking systems, and wrecking networks. It is also tracked as Labyrinth Chollima and Black Artemis.

A security team at Microsoft-owned LinkedIn also saw these actors creating fake profiles to impersonate recruiters from companies in the technology, defense, and media entertainment sectors.

Targets were guided off LinkedIn to WhatsApp to share malware, and included IT and IT support workers at companies in the US, UK and India, according to Microsoft. Google's Threat Analysis Group (TAG) found the group using Twitter, Discord, YouTube, Telegram, Keybase and email [with similar tactics last January](#).

US authorities [warned US and European firms](#) to beware of IT contractors applying for support and developer roles last year.

LinkedIn's Threat Prevention and Defense team terminated the bogus accounts.

"ZINC primarily targeted engineers and technical support professionals working at media and information technology companies located in the UK, India, and the US," MSTIC warned.

"Targets received outreach tailored to their profession or background and were encouraged to apply for an open position at one of several legitimate companies. In accordance with their policies, for accounts identified in these attacks, LinkedIn quickly terminated any accounts associated with inauthentic or fraudulent behavior."

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HEADLINE	10/01 Shangri-La hotels customers' data hacked
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/shangri-la-hotels-customer-database-hacked
GIST	The Shangri-La hotel group has said a database containing the personal information of customers at eight of its Asian properties between May and July has been hacked.

The breach covered hotels in Hong Kong, Singapore, Chiang Mai, Taipei and Tokyo but the company said it had not yet been able to determine what data had been stolen.

It said in a statement on its website dated September 30 that it had "recently discovered unauthorised activities" on its IT network.

A "sophisticated threat actor managed to bypass Shangri-La's IT security monitoring systems undetected, and illegally accessed the guest databases", the firm said.

The hacking took place between May and July, a period during which a Shangri-La hotel in Singapore hosted Asia's top security summit.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe were among those at the June 10-12 event but it was unclear how many attendees stayed in the hotel.

"Certain data files were found to have been exfiltrated from these databases but the investigation has not been able to verify the content of these files," the Shangri-La statement said.

"The databases contained guests' contact information but personal information such as dates of birth, identity and passport numbers, and credit card details, was encrypted."

Shangri-La said "there is no indication that any guest data has been misused" and it has notified authorities and guests possibly affected.

Singapore's Straits Times newspaper quoted a spokesman for the [International Institute for Strategic Studies](#), which organised the security summit, as saying the gathering was unaffected by the hack.

"Data related to the Shangri-La Dialogue was stored on a separate secure server and was not affected in this incident," the spokesman said.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Dodging draft fuels flourishing scam market
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/russians-dodging-mobilization-behind-flourishing-scam-market/
GIST	<p>Ever since Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered partial mobilization after facing setbacks on the Ukrainian front, men in Russia and the state's conscript officers are playing a 'cat and mouse' game involving technology and cybercrime services.</p> <p>More specifically, many Russian men eligible for enlistment have resorted to illegal channels that provide them with fabricated exemptions, while those fleeing the country to neighboring regions turn to use identity masking tools.</p> <p>This situation has created a highly lucrative environment for sellers of illicit services to flourish. Similarly, scammers and fraudsters also see an excellent opportunity to exploit panicking people in a great hurry.</p> <p>Fake documents</p> <p>The first category of scammers that attempt to take advantage of the situation are cybercriminals selling forged documents on the dark web, telegram, and other private channels.</p> <p>The scammers are even aggressively promoting their fake services on social media and directly contacting people on channels that discuss the mobilization.</p> <p>According to a report by RIA Novosti, the crooks offer individuals certificates of unfitness for military service that will supposedly help them evade enlistment.</p>

The promise includes to update the database of the regional enlistment office within 48 hours so that the recruitment officers will never look for the buyer.

In exchange for this, the fraudsters request a photocopy of the client's passport and 27,000 rubles (\$470). Once the amount is paid, the scammers stop communication with the victim and likely use the stolen personal details for further fraud or sell them on the dark web.

Israeli cyber-intelligence firm KELA has also [spotted](#) several posts offering falsified document creation services on the dark web, claiming ability to forge HIV and hepatitis certificates for 33,000 and 38,000 rubles (\$630) respectively.

"Gray" SIM cards

Another interesting trend that arose from the widescale exit of Russians is a 50% rise in the demand for the so-called "gray" SIM cards, reported by Russian news outlet [Kommersant](#).

These are SIMs that people can get without presenting an identity document or registering their real subscriber information to the telecommunication service providers.

Kommersant's source stated that these SIM cards work in the networks of MTS, MegaFon, Beeline, Tele2, and Yota, and concern "pay-as-you-use" programs.

Russians are frantically seeking these cards because the state can use regular SIMs to track young men eligible for military service and possibly stop them at the border.

IMEI tracking

All this has led to the Russian border officers now tracking people based on their IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity), a unique 15-digit identifier linked to the device's hardware, not the SIM card.

According to the Russian internet rights organization [Roskomsvoboda](#), there are multiple [reports](#) of people who FSB agents forced to give away their IMEI numbers while crossing the border to Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Finland.

IMEI tracking works by using telecommunication antennas for approximate location triangulation, and it's made possible thanks to the mobile operator keeping the number stored in their database.

IMEI is included in every data transaction and communication request from and to the device and adjacent antennas, so it's a persistent identifier.

It's the same system used by tracking software promising to locate your lost or stolen device, while law enforcement has also been using IMEI for many years now.

Assigned IMEIs aren't interchangeable or editable, except for some Huawei, Xiaomi, and ZTE models that store the IMEI in a rewritable memory section in violation of the technology's guidelines, giving users the capability to flash it with specialized tools.

Alternatively, Roskomsvoboda suggests that fleeing Russians should present a burner phone at the border or buy a new device after leaving the country.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Hackers release stolen L.A. schools data
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/los-angeles-unified-school-district-ransomware-attack-hackers-stolen-data-release-11664744081?mod=lead feature below a pos1

A criminal organization that recently [hacked the Los Angeles public school system](#) released some illegally obtained data over the weekend, the district said Sunday, after the superintendent refused to pay a ransom.

“Unfortunately, as expected, data was recently released by a criminal organization,” Los Angeles Unified School District superintendent Albert Carvalho said in a statement Sunday. “In partnership with law enforcement, our experts are analyzing the full extent of this data release.”

Mr. Carvalho didn’t reveal the demands made by the criminal organization or the type of data that was released.

The cyberattack on the Los Angeles public school system, the second-largest in the country after New York City, began during Labor Day weekend as students prepared to return to the classroom.

The Los Angeles Unified School District didn’t name the group suspected in the ransomware attack that nearly shut down the district’s online systems ahead of the first day of school on Sept. 6.

The Los Angeles public school system has set up a hotline for employees, vendors, students and families to call with questions, Mr. Carvalho said. He said the district would notify anyone whose personal information was affected by the breach.

“We also expect to provide credit monitoring services, as appropriate, to impacted individuals,” he said.

Mr. Carvalho said Friday that school officials and law enforcement were aware a data release was imminent, adding that he didn’t believe that giving in to blackmail would solve the problem.

“Paying ransom never guarantees the full recovery of data,” Mr. Carvalho said. “Los Angeles Unified believes public dollars are better spent on our students rather than capitulating to a nefarious and illicit crime syndicate.”

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the White House, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and numerous cybersecurity experts were involved in the investigation of the ransomware attack, Mr. Carvalho said. The probe is ongoing.

In a ransomware attack, malicious software, or malware, is used to deny access to computer systems or data until a ransom is paid.

Such malware is often disseminated through email attachments or links that infect a device and its connected networks. After encrypting files, [hackers usually demand payment](#) in the form of some kind of cryptocurrency in exchange for releasing the files and systems.

School systems have grappled with cybersecurity threats for some time. Attacks increased during the height of the [Covid-19 pandemic](#) as classroom instruction went virtual.

Brett Callow, threat analyst with cybersecurity company Emsisoft, said some schools in recent years have had to pay off their attackers. Notably, the University of California, San Francisco [paid \\$1.1 million to hackers in 2020](#).

But often, schools refuse to pay or are unable to, and hackers follow through on their threats. Mr. Callow said 26 school districts were hit with a ransomware attack in the U.S. so far this year. Hackers released sensitive data from 24 of those districts.

A [wave of ransomware attacks](#) targeted large corporations in 2021. Meat processor [JBS](#) SA was taken offline by a ransomware attack, [snarling the food industry](#). An attack on Colonial Pipeline Co. led to a [six-day shutdown](#) of the East Coast’s largest conduit for fuel.

HEADLINE	09/30 Mexico Defense Dept. emails hacked
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/hack-puts-latin-american-security-agencies-edge
GIST	<p>A massive trove of emails from Mexico's Defense Department is among electronic communications taken by a group of hackers from military and police agencies across several Latin American countries, Mexico's president confirmed Friday.</p> <p>The acknowledgement by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador comes after Chile's government said last week that emails had been taken from its Joint Chiefs of Staff.</p> <p>The Mexican president spoke at his daily news conference following a local media report that the hack revealed previously unknown details about a health scare he had in January.</p> <p>López Obrador downplayed the hack, saying that "there's nothing that isn't known." He said the intrusion apparently occurred during a change of Defense Department systems.</p> <p>But Chile was so concerned by the breach to its own systems that it called its defense minister back from the United States last week where she was attending the United Nations General Assembly with President Gabriel Boric.</p> <p>The 10 terabytes of data taken by the group also include emails from the militaries in El Salvador, Peru and Colombia, as well as El Salvador's National Police. The Mexico portion of the data appeared to be the largest.</p> <p>A group of anonymous, self-described social justice warriors who call themselves Guacamaya say they use hacking to expose injustice and corruption in defense of Indigenous peoples. Hackers using the same name previously hacked and released the emails of a mining company long accused of human rights and environmental abuses in Guatemala.</p> <p>In a statement accompanying the most recent action, the group complained of the plundering of Latin America, which it refers to as Abya Yala, by colonizers and the continuing extractivist goals of the "Global North."</p> <p>The group issued a 1,400-word comunique saying that the militaries and police of Latin American countries, often with extensive training by the United States, are used by governments "to keep their inhabitants prisoner."</p> <p>"The police minimize the risk that the people exercise their honorable right to protest, to destroy the system that oppresses them," the group wrote.</p> <p>The group said it would make the documents available to journalists, but so far only a tiny portion has been reported — in part, perhaps, because of the sheer quantity of the data.</p> <p>In an email exchange, the hackers said that their review of the Mexico emails so far indicated that much of the information was already publicly available and they doubted there were "explosive" emails — possibly because more sensitive communications were better protected.</p> <p>But they said there was evidence of the military closely following political and social movements.</p> <p>They said those include relatives of 43 students who were kidnapped by local police and allegedly handed over to be killed by a drug gang in 2014 — a case in which some military officers have been accused of involvement — as well as the Zapatista rebel movement that staged a 1994 uprising in southern Mexico and groups opposed to López Obrador's current effort to build a tourist train around the Yucatan Peninsula.</p>

	<p>Rather than seeking monetary benefit or ransom for compromising government information systems through a cyberattack, Guacamaya appears to be more of a “hacktivist” hack-and-leak operation with social justice goals.</p> <p>López Obrador was responding to a television report by Mexican journalist Carlos Loret de Mola who said among the hacked emails were medical records about the president, including a previously undisclosed emergency air flight to the capital from his ranch in January, when he was suffering serious chest pains and at risk of a heart attack.</p> <p>Later that month he underwent a heart catheterization, which was made public, but at the time was described as the result of a routine examination. López Obrador suffered a heart attack in 2013 and has high blood pressure.</p> <p>The 68-year-old president noted at his news conference that he suffers from a number of ailments and undergoes checkups every few months.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 NKorea hackers use new FudModule rootkit
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/lazarus-hackers-abuse-dell-driver-bug-using-new-fudmodule-rootkit/
GIST	<p>The notorious North Korean hacking group 'Lazarus' was seen installing a Windows rootkit that abuses a Dell hardware driver in a Bring Your Own Vulnerable Driver attack.</p> <p>The spear-phishing campaign unfolded in the autumn of 2021, and the confirmed targets include an aerospace expert in the Netherlands and a political journalist in Belgium.</p> <p>According to ESET, which published a report on the campaign today, the primary goal was espionage and data theft.</p> <p>Abusing Dell driver for BYOVD attacks</p> <p>The EU-based targets of this campaign were emailed fake job offers, this time for Amazon, a typical and common social engineering trick employed by the hackers in 2022.</p> <p>Opening these documents downloads a remote template from a hardcoded address, followed by infections involving malware loaders, droppers, custom backdoors, and more.</p> <p>ESET reports that among the tools deployed in this campaign, the most interesting is a new FudModule rootkit that abuses a BYOVD (Bring Your Own Vulnerable Driver) technique to exploit a vulnerability in a Dell hardware driver for the first time.</p> <p>"The most notable tool delivered by the attackers was a user-mode module that gained the ability to read and write kernel memory due to the CVE-2021-21551 vulnerability in a legitimate Dell driver," explains ESET in a new report on the attack.</p> <p>"This is the first ever recorded abuse of this vulnerability in the wild."</p> <p>"The attackers then used their kernel memory write access to disable seven mechanisms the Windows operating system offers to monitor its actions, like registry, file system, process creation, event tracing etc., basically blinding security solutions in a very generic and robust way."</p> <p>A Bring Your Own Vulnerable Driver (BYOVD) attack is when threat actors load legitimate, signed drivers in Windows that also contain known vulnerabilities. As the kernel drivers are signed, Windows will allow the driver to be installed in the operating system.</p>

However, the threat actors can now exploit the driver's vulnerabilities to launch commands with kernel-level privileges.

In this attack, Lazarus was exploiting the CVE-2021-21551 vulnerability in a [Dell hardware driver](#) ("dbutil_2_3.sys"), which corresponds to a [set of five flaws](#) that remained exploitable for 12 years before the computer vendor finally pushed security updates for it.

In December 2021, researchers at Rapid 7 [warned about this particular driver](#) being an excellent candidate for BYOVD attacks due to Dell's inadequate fixes, allowing kernel code execution even on recent, signed versions.

It appears that Lazarus was already well aware of this potential for abuse and exploited the Dell driver well before security analysts issued their public warnings.

"The attackers then used their kernel memory write access to disable seven mechanisms the Windows operating system offers to monitor its actions, like registry, file system, process creation, event tracing etc., basically blinding security solutions in a very generic and robust way," continued ESET's report.

For those interested in the BYOVD aspect of the Lazarus attack, you can dive into the details on this 15-page [technical paper](#) that ESET published separately.

BLINDINGCAN and other tools

ESET added that the group deployed its trademark custom HTTP(S) backdoor 'BLINDINGCAN,' first discovered by U.S. intelligence [in August 2020](#) and attributed to Lazarus by Kaspersky [in October 2021](#). The 'BLINDINGCAN' remote access trojan (RAT) sampled by ESET appears to run with significant backing from an undocumented server-side dashboard that performs parameter validation.

The backdoor supports an extensive set of 25 commands, covering file actions, command execution, C2 communication configuration, screenshot taking, process creation and termination, and system info exfiltration.

Other tools deployed in the presented campaign are the previously described FudModule Rootkit, an HTTP(S) uploader used for secure data exfiltration, and various trojanized open-source apps like wolfSSL and FingerText.

Trojanizing open-source tools are something Lazarus continues to do, as [a Microsoft report from yesterday](#) mentions this technique was used with PuTTY, KiTTY, TightVNC, Sumatra PDF Reader, and the muPDF/Subliminal Recording software installer.

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HEADLINE	09/30 Cybercriminals see allure in BEC attacks
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/cybercriminals-see-allure-bec-attacks-ransomware?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>While published trends in ransomware attacks have been contradictory — with some firms tracking more incidents and other fewer — business email compromise (BEC) attacks continue to have proven success against organizations.</p> <p>BEC cases, as a share of all incident-response cases, more than doubled in the second quarter of the year, to 34% from 17% in the first quarter of 2022. That's according to Arctic Wolf's "1H 2022 Incident Response Insights" report, published on Sept. 29, which found that specific industries — including financial, insurance, business services, and law firms, as well as government agencies — experienced more than double their previous number of cases, the company said.</p> <p>Overall, the number of BEC attacks encountered per email box has grown by 84% in the first half of 2022, according to data from cybersecurity firm Abnormal Security.</p>

Meanwhile, so far this year, threat reports released by organizations have revealed contradictory trends for ransomware. Arctic Wolf and the Identity Theft Resource Center (ITRC) have seen [drops in the number of successful ransomware attacks](#), while business customers seem to be encountering ransomware less often, [according to security firm Trellix](#). At the same time, network security firm WatchGuard had a contrary take, noting that its detection of ransomware attacks [skyrocketed 80% in the first quarter of 2022](#), compared with all of last year.

The Gleam of BEC Outshines Ransomware

The surging state of BEC landscape is unsurprising, says Daniel Thanos, vice president of Arctic Wolf Labs, because BEC attacks offer cybercriminals advantages over ransomware. Specifically, BEC gains do not rely on the value of cryptocurrency, and attacks are often more successful at escaping notice while in progress.

"Our research shows that threat actors are unfortunately very opportunistic," he says.

For that reason, BEC — which uses social engineering and internal systems to steal funds from businesses — continues to be a stronger source of revenue for cybercriminals. In 2021, BEC attacks accounted for 35%, or \$2.4 billion, of the \$6.9 billion in potential losses [tracked by the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](#), while ransomware remained a small fraction (0.7%) of the total.

In terms of revenue from individual attacks on businesses, the Arctic Wolf analysis noted that the median ransom for the first quarter was about \$450,000, but the research team did not provide the average loss for victims of BEC attacks.

Shifting Financially Motivated Cyber Tactics

Abnormal Security found [in its threat report](#) earlier this year that the vast majority of all cybercrime incidents (81%) involved external vulnerabilities in a few highly targeted products — namely, Microsoft's Exchange server and VMware's Horizon virtual-desktop software — as well as poorly configured remote services, such as Microsoft's Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP).

Unpatched versions of Microsoft Exchange in particular are vulnerable to the ProxyShell exploit (and now the [ProxyNotShell bugs](#)), which uses three vulnerabilities to give attackers administrative access to an Exchange system. While Microsoft patched the issues more than a year ago, the company did not publicize the vulnerabilities until a few months later.

VMware Horizon is a popular virtual desktop and app product [vulnerable to the Log4Shell attack](#) that exploited the infamous Log4j 2.0 vulnerabilities.

Both avenues [are fueling BEC campaigns](#) specifically, researchers have noted.

In addition, many cyber gangs are using data or credentials stolen from businesses during ransomware attacks to [fuel BEC campaigns](#).

"As organizations and employees become more aware of one tactic, threat actors will adjust their strategies in an effort to stay one step ahead of email security platforms and security awareness training," [Abnormal Security said](#) earlier this year. "The changes noted in this research are just some of the indicators that those shifts are already occurring, and organizations should expect to see more in the future."

Social engineering is popular, too, as ever. While external attacks on vulnerabilities and misconfigurations are the most prevalent way that attackers gain access to systems, human users and their credentials continue to be a popular target in BEC attacks, says Arctic Wolf's Thanos.

	<p>"BEC cases are often the result of social engineering, compared to ransomware cases, which are often caused by exploitation of unpatched vulnerabilities or remote access tools," he says. "In our experience, threat actors are more likely to attack a company via remote exploit than dupe a human.</p> <p>How to Avoid BEC Compromise</p> <p>To avoid being a victim, basic security measures can go a long way, Arctic Wolf found. In fact, many companies falling prey to BEC attacks did not have security controls that potentially could have prevented damage, the company stated in its analysis.</p> <p>For instance, the research found that 80% of those companies suffering a BEC incident had no multifactor authentication in place. In addition, other controls, such as network segmentation and security awareness training, could help prevent BEC attacks from being costly, even after the attacker successfully compromises an external system.</p> <p>"Companies should strengthen their employee defenses through security training," Thanos says, "but they also need to address the vulnerabilities that threat actors focus on."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 Ransomware pressure on L.A. schools
SOURCE	https://www.cybersecuritydive.com/news/vice-society-threatens-los-angeles-schools-ransomware/633076/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>Vice Society on Friday listed the Los Angeles Unified School District on its ransomware leak site, four weeks after the country's second-largest school system was hit by a major ransomware attack.</p> <p>The group threatened to publish data it claims to have stolen during the attack on Oct. 3 at 4 p.m. PST. Ransomware groups typically list their victims on leak sites to increase pressure and set deadlines for victims to meet their ransom demand before stolen data is published.</p> <p>The threat, which was discovered and published on Twitter by Brett Callow, threat analyst at Emsisoft, effectively gives the Los Angeles school district less than four days to respond. Vice Society did not include any details about the data it plans to publish.</p> <p>"The only thing we now know is the date and time that they'll release whatever data they supposedly have," Callow said via email.</p> <p>Vice Society has hit at least eight other U.S. school districts, colleges or universities this year, he said.</p> <p>Alberto Carvalho, superintendent at LAUSD, previously confirmed a ransom demand was made by the group that breached the district's systems. But, in an interview with the Los Angeles Times, Carvalho declined to state the amount demanded or what information the threat actor claims to have stolen.</p> <p>The district has been following ransomware guidance from multiple federal agencies that are assisting with the investigation and recovery. Carvalho last week said the district had not responded to the ransom demand.</p> <p>Vice Society was singled out in a joint Cybersecurity Advisory from federal authorities the same day LAUSD went public with the attack. The district and federal authorities have not publicly acknowledged the group is behind the attack, but the connection remains implied.</p> <p>A spokesperson for LAUSD said the district is investigating the latest development, but did not have further information to share.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 CISA: 3 security bugs exploited in attacks
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/cisa-hackers-exploit-critical-bitbucket-server-flaw-in-attacks/?&web_view=true

GIST	<p>The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has added three more security flaws to its list of bugs exploited in attacks, including a Bitbucket Server RCE and two Microsoft Exchange zero-days.</p> <p>CISA's Known Exploited Vulnerabilities (KEV) catalog now includes two Microsoft Exchange zero-days (CVE-2022-41040 and CVE-2022-41082) exploited in limited, targeted attacks, according to Microsoft.</p> <p>While Microsoft hasn't yet released security updates to address this pair of actively exploited bugs, it shared mitigation measures requiring customers to add an IIS server blocking rule that would block attack attempts.</p> <p>"Microsoft is also monitoring these already deployed detections for malicious activity and will take necessary response actions to protect customers. [...] We are working on an accelerated timeline to release a fix," Microsoft said earlier today.</p> <p>The third security flaw CISA added to its KEV list today (tracked as CVE-2022-36804) is a critical severity command injection vulnerability in Atlassian's Bitbucket Server and Data Center, with publicly available proof of concept exploit code.</p> <p>Attackers can gain remote code execution by exploiting the flaw via malicious HTTP requests. Still, they must have access to a public repository or read permissions to a private one.</p> <p>This RCE vulnerability impacts all Bitbucket Server and Data Center versions after 6.10.17, including 7.0.0 and up to 8.3.0.</p> <p>BinaryEdge and GreyNoise confirmed that attackers have been scanning and attempting to exploit CVE-2022-36804 in the wild [1, 2] since at least September 20th.</p> <p>Federal agencies ordered to mitigate</p> <p>All Federal Civilian Executive Branch Agencies (FCEB) agencies apply patches or mitigation measures for these three actively exploited bugs after being added to CISA's KEV catalog as required by a binding operational directive (BOD 22-01) from November.</p> <p>The federal agencies were given three weeks, until October 21st, to ensure that exploitation attempts would be blocked.</p> <p>The U.S. cybersecurity agency also strongly urged all private and public sector organizations worldwide to prioritize patching these vulnerabilities, although BOD 22-01 only applies to U.S. FCEB agencies.</p> <p>Applying patches ASAP will help them decrease the attack surface potential attackers could target in breach attempts.</p> <p>"These types of vulnerabilities are a frequent attack vector for malicious cyber actors and pose significant risk to the federal enterprise," CISA explained on Thursday.</p> <p>Since the BOD 22-01 binding directive was issued last year, CISA has added more than 800 security flaws to its catalog of bugs exploited in attacks while requiring federal agencies to address them on a tighter schedule.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 Cracking Iran's internet blockade
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/subvert-iran-internet-blackout/
GIST	<p>AMID WIDESPREAD PROTESTS across Iran sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in “morality police” custody earlier this month, the government has imposed severe and extensive internet blackouts and blocked numerous digital services around the country for days. With most of Iran’s 80 million citizens impacted, people around the world have been searching for ways to get Iranians back online. But every approach comes with caveats.</p>

Iranians have faced [escalating](#) internet restrictions [for years](#) and have some workarounds in place as a result, like VPNs and other relay services. As repressive governments have [increasingly deployed connectivity blackouts](#) as a means to control citizens, the measure has morphed from a dark horse tactic to a well-known strategy. But even with increased awareness, there's still no easy, affordable, and broad way to restore digital access to people whose government is actively blocking it.

Efforts to reinstate digital lifelines in Iran center around two goals. Both broadband internet and mobile data are suffering outages, thanks to what are essentially internet "off" switches—infrastructure the regime has spent years investing in. So one area of focus is the potential to establish alternative connections, namely through satellite services. But the government is also filtering and blocking access to specific digital services even when people can connect to Wi-Fi or mobile data. This means people inside and outside of the country are also attempting to provide technical workarounds so Iranians can maintain access to vital services that would otherwise be inaccessible, like WhatsApp and Instagram. Given the extent of the government's control, the logistical hurdles, and extensive global sanctions currently in place against Iran, progress is slow.

"The first thing we need to understand is that this time is different because they are going after every possible channel of communication," says Amir Rashidi, director of internet security and digital rights at the Iran-focused human rights organization Mian Group. "And this is something that was really new to us. As someone who's worked on the internet of Iran for more than a decade, I never saw the Iranian government so aggressively going after every communication channel."

Rashidi says that all email providers, including Yahoo Mail and Mail.com, are blocked. (Perhaps counterintuitively, Gmail, iCloud, and ProtonMail are still accessible.) Messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram are also blocked, and the government is even cutting access to many video games because of their chat functions.

Last week, the United States Treasury Department [issued a general license](#) to create leeway within otherwise stringent sanctions for US tech companies to provide hardware, software, cloud services, and other technology to Iranians if they can find a way to do so.

"While Iran's government is cutting off its people's access to the global internet, the United States is taking action to support the free flow of information and access to fact-based information to the Iranian people," the Treasury wrote. "The updated guidance will authorize technology companies to offer the Iranian people more options of secure, outside platforms and services."

Some communication services have systems in place for attempting to skirt digital blockades. The [secure messaging app Signal](#), for example, [offers tools](#) so people around the world can set up proxy servers that securely relay Signal traffic to bypass government filters. Proxy service has previously only been available for Signal on Android, but the platform [added iOS support](#) on Wednesday.

Still, if people in Iran don't already have the Signal app installed on their phones or haven't registered their phone numbers, the connectivity outages make it difficult to download the app or receive the SMS code used for account setup. Android users who can't connect to Google Play can also [download the app directly](#) from Signal's website, but this creates the possibility that malicious versions of the Signal app could circulate on other forums and trick people into downloading them. In an attempt to address this, the Signal Foundation [created](#) the email address "getsignal@signal.org" that people can message to request a safe copy of the app.

The anonymity service Tor is largely inaccessible in Iran, but some activists are working to establish Tor bridges within Iran to connect internal country networks to the global platform. The work is difficult without infrastructure and resources, though, and is extremely dangerous if the regime detects the activity. Similarly, other efforts to [establish clandestine infrastructure](#) within the country are fraught because they often require too much technical expertise for a layperson to carry out safely. Echoing the issue with safely

downloading apps like Signal, it can also be difficult for people to determine whether circumvention measures they learn about are legitimate or tainted.

Users in Iran have also been leaning on other services that have proxies built in. For example, Firuzeh Mahmoudi, executive director of the US-based nonprofit United for Iran, says that the law enforcement-tracking app Gershad has been in heavy use during the connectivity blackouts. The app, which has been circulating in Iran since 2016 and is now developed by United for Iran, lets users crowdsource information about the movements of the regime's "morality police" and is now also being used to track other security forces and checkpoints.

The basic issue of connectivity access is still a fundamental challenge. Efforts to provide satellite service as an alternative could theoretically be very fruitful and threaten the totality of internet blackouts. SpaceX CEO Elon Musk [tweeted](#) last week that he was "activating" the company's Starlink satellite internet service for people in Iran. In practice, though, the option isn't a panacea. To use Starlink or any satellite internet, you need hardware that includes base stations to pick up and translate the signal. Procuring and setting up this infrastructure takes resources and is especially infeasible in a place like Iran, where sanctions and trade blockades drastically limit access to equipment and the ability to pay for subscription services or other connectivity fees. And even if users can overcome these hurdles, jamming is also a potential issue. The French satellite operator Eutelsat [said](#) yesterday, for example, that two of its satellites were being jammed from Iran. In addition to providing internet services, the satellites also broadcast two prominent Iranian dissident television channels.

"There are just so many challenges of installing this in Iran," Miaan Group's Rashidi says. "If you have a terminal, my understanding is that Starlink is working, but getting those terminals into the country is a challenge. And then they are a security risk because the government can locate those terminals. And then, who is going to pay for all of it and how, given the sanctions? But even if you ignore all those issues, satellite base stations don't solve the problem that mobile data is part of the shutdown. You can't put a Starlink terminal in your backpack to go to a protest. So satellite connectivity would be helpful, but it doesn't solve the issues."

Though the problem is nuanced, human rights advocates and Iranian activists emphasize that the global community can make a difference by raising awareness and continuing to work on creative solutions to the problem. With digital censorship and connectivity blackouts being used as levers for authoritarian control, developing circumvention tools is increasingly vital. As United for Iran's Mahmoudi puts it, "We all need to keep the lights on."

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Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	10/03 Somalia: a top al-Shabab leader killed
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/africa-army-somalia-al-shabab-ahmed-abdi-godane-173c0573df14794a8b7ef0a4491f82ae
GIST	<p>MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Somali authorities say a top leader of the al-Shabab extremist group has been killed in a joint operation by the Somali National Army and international partner forces.</p> <p>Abdullahi Nadir had a \$3 million bounty on his head by the United States and the Somali government described him as "one of the most important members of al-Shabab."</p> <p>He was killed Saturday in Haramka village in the Middle Jubba region, said the government statement issued Monday. He had been close to the former emir of al-Shabab, Ahmed Abdi Godane, and current leader Ahmed Diriye.</p>

	<p>“His death is a thorn removed from the Somali nation, and the Somali people will be relieved from his misguidance and horrific acts,” the statement said, adding that Nadir had been in position to succeed the current al-Shabab leader.</p> <p>Somalia’s president recently declared “total war” against al-Shabab, which has thousands of fighters and controls large parts of southern and central Somalia. The group supports itself in part by “taxing” or extorting residents, businesspeople and travelers, according to residents.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Somalia: al-Shabab losing ground
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/shabaab-continues-to-lose-ground-in-central-somalia/
GIST	<p>Over the last few weeks, troops from the Somali National Army (SNA), backed by clan-based militias, African Union forces, and U.S. air support, have steadily made progress against Shabaab, al Qaeda’s branch in East Africa, across central Somalia.</p> <p>Beginning earlier this month, the SNA, alongside clan-based militias known as the Macawisley, began an offensive against Shabaab in Somalia’s central Hiraan region. These operations then spread into the neighboring regions of Galguduud, further northeast, and Bay, to the southwest of Hiraan.</p> <p>Somali officials in all three regions, as well as from the federal government in Mogadishu, have touted that the combined operations have re-taken dozens of towns and villages from Shabaab, many of which have been under the direct control of the al Qaeda branch for over a decade.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Israel: 6 arrests; ISIS cell planning attack
SOURCE	https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/360640
GIST	<p>Six residents of Nazareth were arrested were arrested in recent weeks on suspicion of planning to carry out attacks on behalf of the ISIS terrorist organization in Israel, it was cleared for publication Sunday morning.</p> <p>The six were arrested following a joint investigation of the Shabak and Israel Police.</p> <p>The arrested are: Muhammad Ihab Suleiman - 25 years old, known to the security forces for his past activities related to Daesh, Aa Afar Suleiman - 21 years old, Moaman Nijam, 20 years old, Ahmed Belal Suleiman, 18 years old, Jihad Bakr, 20 years old. Another minor was also arrested whose name and age are prohibited from publication.</p> <p>According to the Shabak investigation, the suspects consumed ISIS content online, in a way that led to a deep identification on their part with the terrorist organization's ideals. They decided to carry out a terrorist attack on behalf of the organization.</p> <p>The suspects met secretly and planned to carry out attacks in various ways, with the main target of the attack being a Muslim high school in Nazareth, which, according to the suspects, "operates in the manner of the 'infidels'."</p> <p>It also emerged from the investigation that the suspects planned various attacks and worked to locate targets for the attack, such as a busy bus stop in a city in the north of the country, a police station in the vicinity of their residence, woods where Jews hang out, and more. In addition, it emerged that they worked to obtain weapons and tried to recruit more in order to promote their security activities.</p> <p>The Shabak said that the exposure of the cell is a significant countermeasure which sheds light on the influence of the ISIS terrorist organization in Israel, which has inspired attacks by Israeli citizens in Beer Sheva, Hadera and Jerusalem in March 2022.</p>

"The terrorist organization continues to work tirelessly to spread its ideology among the citizens of the State of Israel and its residents and, among other things, works to recruit them through propaganda distributed on the Internet, including on social networks, with the aim of promoting terrorist activity in Israel," the Shabak said.

Indictments will be filed against the six today by the North District Prosecutor's Office, charging them with the offenses of conspiracy to commit terrorism, preparation for a terrorist act, conspiracy to trade in illegal drugs, and membership in a terrorist organization. A request was also submitted for their arrest until the end of the legal proceedings.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Vets lobby to rescue allies in Afghanistan
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/02/afghanistan-taliban-us-veterans-allies-interpreters-rescue
GIST	<p>A group of 12 people sit in camp chairs – chatting, smoking, listening – in the dark. Behind them, the Capitol building in Washington DC is luminescent, bringing into focus the Afghan flag. Well, the version of the flag before the Taliban changed it. It flies above their heads, catching the yellowy light of dusk.</p> <p>Since Kabul fell to the Taliban in August last year, military veterans and organizations have been lobbying Congress to offer Afghan evacuees long-term visas to stay in the US. Now, with no action taken and thousands coming to the end of their temporary stays, a different route is being taken to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act. This bipartisan bill would grant thousands of Afghans permanent status in the US.</p> <p>If cleared by additional security checks, Afghans who supported the US mission in Afghanistan or were evacuated after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban last August will be given long-term authorization to stay.</p> <p>“By sitting out here, we are trying to hold Congress accountable,” said Matt Zeller, a US army veteran and co-founder of No One Left Behind, an organization that advocates for special immigrant visa programs for foreign employees of the US.</p> <p>“In Afghanistan, these people had our backs,” he added. “Here, it is time that we had theirs.”</p> <p>Zeller is one of several veterans who have teamed up with Afghans in the US to spearhead this initiative, or “Fire Watch”, as the group refers to it. He is joined by his former interpreter, Safi, who saved his life while he was serving in Afghanistan.</p> <p>Safi moved to the US in 2010, and the two describe themselves as brothers and best friends. They spend Thanksgiving and Ramadan together, like family, and have even become uncles to each other’s children.</p> <p>Habiba Ashna Marhoon, a dual citizen of Afghanistan and the US, is here for similar reasons, with the same goals in mind.</p> <p>While she and Safi have permanent status to remain in the US, they have friends, families and colleagues who have been left in a legal gray zone – some uprooted from their homes only to be further neglected on US soil.</p> <p>“This is not for me; this is for the people who worked with the Americans,” said Marhoon. “For my brother-in-law, whose family is waiting in danger in Kandahar. And for the Afghan women activists who are in the US but whose visas soon expire.</p> <p>“They need this green card. The Taliban will kill them if they are made to go back.”</p>

Each day, Marhoon prepares traditional Afghan dishes to bring from her home in Virginia to the group outside the Capitol. A few days ago, it was bolani, a thin-crust flatbread often served with pumpkins or chives.

“Safi told me that if I brought more, we might get more people,” Marhoon said, laughing. “I didn’t realize he was joking, so that’s what I’ve been doing.”

Not all of those to whom this act is crucial can be there. Safi’s cousin Jamal, who worked with the US government in Afghanistan and also helped citizens escape during the US evacuation, is trapped in Kabul. He has been waiting to leave since last August with his wife and three young children. But because there is no guarantee of long-term stability in the US, he fears that if he left Afghanistan only to have to return, it would be “nothing but a suicide”.

“This [Afghan Adjustment Act] would give my family and me much more patience,” Jamal said. “It would allow us to feel secure and more mentally relaxed about our future.”

Roughly 80,000 Afghans in the US alone could be saved from an uncertain future under humanitarian parole status, which only grants individual citizenship for up to two years if the bill were to pass. And it would also extend a path to safety for many nationals left behind, which is imperative at a time when thousands are in danger. Yet the Afghan Adjustment Act faces opposition from several Republican politicians, who see the evacuees as a potential threat to US security.

“If only they read the bill, they’d notice that enhanced vetting is an important component of it,” Safi said. “It also calls for the vetting of those who were evacuated last year.”

Supporters of the Afghan Adjustment Act hoped it would be included in a recently passed short-term government funding bill. It was not, but they are still optimistic.

“Realistically, this is probably just going to get attached to something else, so the next big target is the omnibus in December,” said lawyer and chair of the Afghan-American Foundation, Joseph Azam.

“Congress will continue to kick the can further down the road,” Azam added.

Until the bill passes, those involved say they will continue to wait it out, even if it takes another six months. They hope their presence outside the Capitol will pressure politicians as each day passes and there are more chairs, energy and faces joining the group.

The initiative started with just three people. Yesterday, the total number reached about 30.

Jamal can only watch the progress in Washington from social media live streams or WhatsApp calls from his apartment in Kabul.

He misses the busy rush of his city, where he says the markets were once full and people loved their homes and lives.

“There was a future besides bomb blasts,” he recounted. “But now, it is dark.”

Every morning, he checks Twitter and waits for updates from his cousin, Safi.

“Do I wish I could be there? Yes. But unfortunately, I can’t,” he said. “I need Safi to sit in front of Congress for me and for us until this act is passed.”

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HEADLINE	10/02 Taliban beat women protesting
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/oct/02/taliban-beat-women-protesting-school-bombing-afghanistan

GIST	<p>Women protesting against the suicide bombing of a school in Afghanistan, which killed 35 young Hazara women and girls on Friday, have been beaten and shot at by Taliban according to witnesses.</p> <p>Dozens of women from the Hazara community protested against the attack on the Kaaj educational centre in Dasht-e-Barchi, a neighbourhood home to the Shia Hazara community in western Kabul.</p> <p>Those who died in the attack were mostly Hazara women aged between 18 to 24 years who had been preparing for an exam.</p> <p>Women who gathered to demonstrate against the killings on Friday said Taliban forces opened fire and used physical violence to break up the protest minutes after it had started.</p> <p>“We were marching together and chanting for justice for our Hazara sisters who were murdered yesterday. This is a genocide of the Hazaras and all we want is education and freedom,” said one Hazara woman.</p> <p>“The Taliban will never protect us and they can’t represent us in the international community. They attacked us with the edge of their guns and beat us up. I am still in pain as I speak.”</p> <p>“The Talib sprayed pepper spray in our eyes, whipped us and humiliated us by calling us prostitutes who take money from the west to protest,” said another protester who did not want to be named.</p> <p>No group has claimed responsibility for Friday’s attack, but the Hazara community is increasingly coming under attack by the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), Islamic State’s affiliate in Afghanistan according to human rights groups.</p> <p>Public anger about the attack has intensified over the weekend, with protests spreading to Bamyan and Herat provinces.</p> <p>Hundreds of women marched from Herat University on Sunday morning demanding their right to education and safety for Hazaras. Witnesses confirmed that Taliban shot repeatedly at the women, with one of them grabbing a protester by her headscarf and pushing her to the ground.</p> <p>“These are the god-fearing men who are ruling this country? Taliban officers are now grabbing us by our hijabs and hair to threaten us and stop us from protesting. We won’t stop fighting,” said one protester.</p> <p>The killings have devastated the Hazara community in Dasht-e-Barchi, with families still trying to retrieve the remains of their daughters and demanding justice.</p> <p>Waheda, a 19-year-old student who was injured in Friday’s attack, said: “My friends and I arrived at 6.30 am to prepare for the test which is usually held on Fridays. Just after 7 am I heard the bomber open fire and the sound of an explosion.</p> <p>“We wanted to run but everything was destroyed so I hid under the chairs. When I heard the explosion turn louder, I ran towards the exit. While running away, I saw bodies covered in blood, one of them had lost her leg, another an arm. My leg was wounded so I jumped up a wall and escaped. I just wanted an education but I didn’t think we would be killed for this.”</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Mozambique: wild animals kill ISIS fighters
SOURCE	https://news.yahoo.com/lions-crocodiles-credited-killing-isis-133711623.html
GIST	<p>Wild lions and snakes have killed a number of ISIS fighters in northern Mozambique, where pro-government forces are battling with the insurgents, The Times reports.</p> <p>Bernardino Rafael, local police chief of the Quissanga district in Cabo Delgado, told villagers that wild animals had contributed to the death toll of jihadist fighters, Known locally as al-Shabab, in the latest bout of remote conflict.</p>

"Some of them died having been hit by bullets from our forces and others due to attacks by animals like snakes, buffalos, lions and even crocodiles," said Rafael, according to The Times.

Sixteen insurgents have been recently buried in the Quissanga district.

[The ISIS militants use the region's forests for cover](#), which still have large populations of [elephants, lions, and leopards](#) despite poaching and human encroachment.

The ISIS attacks on Mozambique, specifically in the oil-rich Cabo Delgado, began in 2017 but became more violent and dangerous in 2020, according to the British think tank [International Institute for Strategic Studies](#).

The Islamic extremist group is fighting in Cabo Delgado, one of the poorest areas of the country, in an attempt to create a breakaway regime by taking advantage of the "weak governance, socio-economic problems, and ethnic and religious marginalization from the national government in Maputo," according to the think tank.

Last year, the UN released a [report](#) saying ISIS had been recruiting and "indoctrinating" children to fight in Mozambique, with UNICEF spokesperson James Elder saying they'd seen footage "apparently showing abducted children as young as five handling weapons and being indoctrinated to fight."

The violence has resulted in over 4,000 casualties in and 950,000 more displaced from their homes, The Times reports.

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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	10/02 Sex offender runs King Co. youth program
SOURCE	https://www.kuow.org/stories/reneades-for-life
GIST	<p>As Saleem Robinson tells it, he used to run the streets of Chicago. Now he runs a nonprofit in Seattle for vulnerable young people.</p> <p>His past makes him particularly qualified for this work, he says. But King County, the primary funder of his nonprofit, has done little research into that past.</p> <p>The county never ran a criminal background check on Robinson, nor verified his credentials, before funding a \$266,400 subcontract in 2021 for him to work with young people affected by gun violence through the nonprofit he founded, Renegades for Life Youth Outreach.</p> <p>A background check would have shown that Robinson does not have the credentials he claims, including a master's degree in social work from Seattle University, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Washington.</p> <p>Officials would have also learned that he was on the sex offender registry until last year, for public masturbation, his second conviction of that nature.</p> <p>They would have seen that Robinson was previously named Basim Salim Abdul-Rahim, and before that, James Thomas Tribble. Those names all appear on court records from earlier this year.</p> <p>Robinson is awaiting trial next month for felony insurance fraud.</p>

His nonprofit, Renegades for Life Youth Outreach, is among 11 organizations that Public Health – Seattle & King County and the City of Seattle support as part of a \$5.9 million gun violence prevention initiative known as the Regional Peacekeepers Collective.

King County does not typically conduct background checks on employees in organizations it contracts with – a hands-off approach that lets people who would not be allowed to work in public schools work one-on-one with young people in crisis.

James Apa, spokesperson for Public Health – Seattle & King County, said the organizations in the Regional Peacekeepers Collective “were identified by the community for their established connections and history of support, credibility and trust to address issues of gun violence.”

King County does not typically require background checks of its contracting agencies, including the Regional Peacekeepers organizations, said Kate Cole, another Public Health spokesperson. However, after KUOW first inquired about the county's background check policies, in July, the county took some action.

"Moving forward, through the county's direction, the lead [Regional Peacekeepers Collective] organizations will provide guidance for and assurance that subcontractors conduct background checks for appropriate staff," Cole said in July.

The lead organization in the collective, Community Passageways, was responsible for ensuring that its subcontractor organizations (like Renegades for Life) background-checked all staff who work with minors, and for physically reviewing the background of executive directors who worked with minors, Apa said.

Asked whether Community Passageways was aware of Robinson's background, spokesperson Katoya Palmer said the organization will conduct an internal investigation.

The Regional Peacekeepers Collective was created in 2021 in response to a recent spike in gunshot injuries and deaths: The King County Prosecutor's Office reports that shootings increased by 80 percent between 2019 and 2021.

The collective stands to receive another \$9 million in [the budget proposed this week by King County Executive Dow Constantine](#), as well as \$1.5 million in Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell's newly proposed budget.

"We're part of the critical incident response," Robinson said of Renegades for Life Youth Outreach's work for the county. His experience as a young man "living that street life" in Chicago, where he recently opened a Renegades for Life chapter, prepared him for this work, he said.

"I'm a social worker. I do case management, I do outreach work," Robinson said by phone last week.

The [Renegades for Life website](#) touts itself as being "known for providing the best youth care programs in Seattle." It says it offers youth mentoring, an after-school program, street outreach, housing services, and support for victims of sex and labor trafficking.

Renegades' youth job skills training involves [unpaid "pre-apprenticeships" cleaning office buildings and residential complexes](#) through Robinson's ex-wife's cleaning service, The Clean Queen.

In addition, Renegades for Life promises young people trauma-informed mental health services.

"Our Expertise is in youth and family counseling!" its website reads. "We have changed the lives of families and youths through careful intervention by keeping them together and providing them with comprehensive tools that work for them and produces a better quality of life! By providing Individual and group counseling with multi-systemic therapy!"

Robinson said his team meets with families after shootings to “provide them with programming to de-escalate and cut down on retaliation, and also to help them heal if there has been a death. We make sure they get grief and loss counseling.”

According to the Renegades website, Robinson’s training includes a Master of Social Work degree from Seattle University in 2007. But that credential is impossible, said university spokesperson Lincoln Vander Veen, because “the first graduating class of our [Master of Social Work] was 2018.”

There is no record that Robinson ever enrolled at Seattle University, Vander Veen said, including under any of his previous names.

Officials at the University of Washington also found no evidence of Robinson’s attendance, nor his purported 2009 bachelor’s degree in psychology.

“I have no idea why my academic records are not showing up. I don’t know what’s going on with that,” Robinson said.

In 2010, then known as Basim Salim Abdul-Rahim, he pleaded guilty to two counts of attempted felony indecent exposure with sexual motivation after a bartender at 13 Coins in SeaTac told police he repeatedly came to the restaurant and masturbated while staring at her.

The first time police responded, according to charging documents, the suspect was gone but had left behind a jar of Vaseline. The next time the bartender called 911, police records show, Abdul-Rahim — aka Robinson — was at the scene with petroleum jelly on his hands.

Court records show he admitted masturbating at the restaurant, but said he wasn’t leering at the bartender — he said he was having phone sex with his wife. When police called his wife, records show, she denied her husband’s claim and told them he had been arrested before for the same offense.

Clallam County court records show Robinson, then known as James Thomas Tribble, pleaded guilty to indecent exposure in 2007 and served 30 days in jail.

Tribble changed his name to Basim Salim Abdul-Rahim in 2009. Days after his 2010 arrest, he changed his name again, to Saleem Robinson.

Robinson was required to register as a sex offender until 2021.

Robinson called his sex offenses “just poor decision making on my part,” but said they are irrelevant to his work for King County. They did not involve children or physical force, he said.

“No one was raped,” he said. “No one was harmed.” He said that the incidents involved having phone sex in public.

“It was a kind of a turn-on to me,” Robinson said. “Everybody gets their sexual excitements in different ways.”

Asked whether those convictions should disqualify him from working with young people, Robinson said that his work for the county only involves adults ages 18 and over.

Robinson said the youth mentoring, therapy and after-school activities mentioned on his organization’s website are still in the “research and development” phase, and do not, in fact, exist.

“We don’t deal with minors here,” Robinson said. “We’re not equipped to deal with kids that age.”

	<p>Robinson’s legal troubles continued in May of this year after he crashed an uninsured car, bought an insurance policy for it hours later, and filed a claim for damages later that evening.</p> <p>Robinson called what happened “a poor choice,” but said he had been unaware of the law.</p> <p>“Had I known that there was such thing as insurance fraud, I would have never filed the claim,” he said.</p> <p>The Regional Peacekeepers Collective intentionally includes outreach workers who have experienced gun violence, “including ‘second chance’ staff with previous criminal records,” said Public Health spokesperson James Apa.</p> <p>By Washington state law, teachers’ licenses are denied or permanently revoked for most sex crime convictions, including indecent exposure.</p> <p>King County, however, sets no criteria for convictions that disqualify contractors from working with youth.</p> <p>“We rely on each agency to evaluate their background check findings to ensure that minors are appropriately protected,” Apa said.</p> <p>Although the county sketched out the roles for each subcontractor organization in the Regional Peacekeepers Collective, the lead contractors, Community Passageways and Rainier Beach Action Coalition, are responsible for the details. Those details are murky – including the exact work Renegades for Life has been contracted to perform.</p> <p>The county does not have copies of the subcontractor organization contracts, Apa said, including \$1.5 million in subcontracts to Renegades for Life Youth Outreach, Alive & Free, Progress Pushers, Choose 180 and Freedom Project.</p> <p>Apa referred KUOW to its lead organization overseeing those sub-grants, Community Passageways, for those contracts.</p> <p>But Community Passageways Chief Operations Officer Katoya Palmer said the organization was “reluctant” to provide KUOW the amounts sub-grantees receive, citing concern about “our community partners and any potential impacts to them.”</p> <p>She did not respond to a request for details about the work those organizations, including Renegades for Life, conduct.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 Covid pushed a flu strain to extinction?
SOURCE	https://arstechnica.com/science/2022/09/covid-may-have-pushed-a-leading-seasonal-flu-strain-to-extinction/
GIST	<p>The pandemic coronavirus' debut wrought universal havoc—not even seasonal flu viruses were spared. Amid travel restrictions, quarantines, closures, physical distancing, masking, enhanced hand washing, and disinfection, the 2020-2021 flu season was all but canceled. That meant not just an unprecedented global decrease in the number of people sick with the flu but also a dramatic collapse in the genetic diversity of circulating flu strains. Many subtypes of the virus all but vanished. But most notably, one entire lineage—one of only four flu groups targeted by seasonal influenza vaccines—went completely dark, seemingly extinct.</p> <p>Researchers noted the absence last year as the flu was still struggling to recover from its pandemic knockout. But now, the flu has come roaring back and threatens to cause a particularly nasty season in the Northern Hemisphere. Still, the influenza B/Yamagata lineage remains missing, according to a study published this week in the journal Eurosurveillance. It has not been definitively detected since April 2020. And the question of whether it's truly gone extinct lingers.</p>

What B/Yamagata's absence might mean for future flu seasons and flu shots also remains an open question. For a quick refresher: Four main types of seasonal flu have been circulating globally among humans in recent years. Two are influenza type A viruses: subtypes of H1N1 viruses and H3N2 viruses. The other two are influenza type B viruses: offshoots of the Victoria and Yamagata lineages. (For a more detailed explanation of influenza, check out [our explainer here](#).) Current quadrivalent vaccines target season-specific versions of each of these four types of flu viruses.

Having fewer flu viruses around means it could be easier to match future vaccines to circulating viruses, making seasonal shots more effective. On the other hand, a surprise re-emergence of B/Yamagata could become more dangerous as time passes and people lose immunity. But, before health experts can game out future influenza seasons, they'd like to know if B/Yamagata is truly gone.

Vanished virus

In an article published this week in the journal *Eurosurveillance*, researchers in the Netherlands sifted through the latest global influenza surveillance data up to August 31, 2022, looking for the missing strain. They note that GISAID, a global database of influenza virus genetic sequences that typically gets thousands of flu sequences each year, has not received a single B/Yamagata sequence with specimen collection data after March 2020.

The World Health Organization's FluNet surveillance data has had a small number of reports of the missing lineage—43 in 2021, mostly from China, and eight sporadic cases from four countries in 2022. For comparison, there were more than 51,000 detections of B/Yamagata in 2018.

The authors suggest the small number of cases in the last two years may be erroneous detections. Rather than circulating viruses, they may simply be detecting signatures of B/Yamagata from vaccines that carry live-attenuated influenza viruses. Or, they could be genetic contamination from inactivated-virus vaccines. This isn't just a hypothetical. The authors note that a number of B/Yamagata detections [in the US](#) and Scotland were found to be from live-attenuated influenza vaccines rather than real cases of circulating virus.

The researchers call for flu surveillance laboratories to increase efforts to detect any Yamagata cases to determine if it's truly gone or just lying low. "From a laboratory perspective, we think it would be advisable to increase the capability and capacity to determine the lineage of all detected influenza B viruses around the world as this is critical to determine the absence of B/Yamagata lineage viruses," they conclude. They also propose that the World Health Organization set up criteria to define when the lineage could be declared "extinct" and what the consequences of what that declaration might be.

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HEADLINE	10/01 New normal? Europe great rivers drying up
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/the-drying-up-of-europes-great-rivers-could-be-the-new-normal/
GIST	<p>Along the fabled Danube River, which snakes its way for 1,800 miles from the Black Forest in Germany to the Black Sea in Romania, scores of towns—such as the small Romanian port of Zimnicea on the Bulgarian border—depend on the waterway for their livelihood. But this summer's epic drought and historic high temperatures, now in a fifth grueling month, have depleted the once-mighty Danube, upending everything that Zimnicea's residents—port workers, farmers, the shipping industry, anglers, restaurant owners, and families—had for generations counted on to sustain themselves. Never in living memory has the river run so low, with large areas of mud-cracked river bottom exposed along Zimnicea's shorelines, the dead mollusks evidence of the devastating toll on riverine life.</p> <p>With the Danube flowing at less than half its usual summer volume, dozens of cargo barges lie motionless in Zimnicea's harbor, waiting for a turn to use the only channel deep enough for passage. Locals are collecting the scant rainwater to use for household purposes in order to save potable water from the Danube for drinking. Children play along the shoreline's new beaches.</p>

As elsewhere along the Danube—and, indeed, across much of Europe this summer—emergency dredging teams have been called in to deepen the riverway to break the cargo jam. Nevertheless, grain transports emanating from Ukraine—with many of its Black Sea ports controlled by Russia, the Danube is an [alternative route](#) for the war-wracked country to export foodstuffs—have been forced to shed cargo weight in order to pass, when they can pass at all.

Across southern Romania, much of which relies on the Danube for fresh drinking water, [hundreds of villages](#) are rationing water supplies and curtailing the irrigation of farmland that Europe relies upon for corn, grain, sunflowers, and vegetables. The cruise ships that normally ferry tourists along the iconic waterway are docked. In the first six months of 2022, Romania's hydropower utility Hidroelectrica generated a [third less electricity](#) than it normally does. And Romanian wheat farmers say that drought has [cost them a fifth](#) of their harvest. Romania is one of Europe's largest wheat producers, and all the more important for the international market in light of Russia's blockage of much of Ukraine's wheat exports.

“At towns up and down the Danube, drought and climate change take on an existential meaning,” explains Nick Thorpe, author of *The Danube: A Journey Upriver from the Black Sea to the Black Forest*. “In contrast to city dwellers, they’re having this disaster unfold before their eyes.”

Nearly [two-thirds](#) of Europe has suffered drought conditions this year—the [worst dry spell](#) in 500 years—and scientists say global warming has played a large role in the crisis. The heat wave has wreaked havoc on many of the continent's waterways—great and small, from the Loire to the Rhine—with wide-ranging knock-on effects for Europe's food supply, commerce, water access, energy systems, and ecology. And scientists warn that if hot, dry summers become a long-term trend, some of these waterways may never recover.

Along the Rhine, barges that carry coal, oil, and commodities that supply millions of people are waylaid. By July, water levels in Italy's Po were so low that the government [declared a state of emergency](#) in northern Italy, where vast fields of crops were abandoned. In France, the warmed waters of the Rhône and Garonne can no longer cool the systems of nuclear power plants, forcing numerous plants to shut down. And hundreds of tributaries to the larger rivers are in even worse shape: bone dry.

In early August, France's prime minister, Élisabeth Borne, said that France is in the midst of the “most severe drought” the country has ever experienced, which has so sapped rivers—including the Loire, the Doubs, the Dordogne, and the Garonne—that hundreds of municipalities now require that drinking water be delivered by truck.

“This year is exceptional in terms of the drought's intensity and duration, and yet it's the new normal,” says Karsten Rinke of Germany's Helmholtz Center for Environmental Research (UFZ). “There's a huge water deficit in Europe's landscape, which is only getting worse every year that it's not replenished.” Rinke says that drought conditions in four of the past five years have sapped groundwater, further shrunk the glaciers that feed rivers, and transformed the landscape that has long nourished communities and ecosystems.

“Perhaps most alarming this year is the scope of the low water levels across the entire Danube basin, from Bavaria to the Black Sea,” says Thomas Hein of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. The basin covers more than 800,000 square kilometers (300,000 square miles) and encompasses 19 countries—[10 percent](#) of continental Europe. “The entire river is affected, which means we can't just pump water from one section to another to make up for the shortfall.”

On the Danube, the river is so low at Novi Sad, Serbia's second largest city, that people can wade across it—something even the city's oldest citizens have never before witnessed. Whole wharfs and their vessels are stranded on dried riverbed, with never-before-seen islands now dotting the shallow waters. Farmers from the rich agricultural regions surrounding Novi Sad [have requested](#) that the government declare a state of emergency. And a grim symbol from the past has emerged: Dozens of sunken German World War II-era warships, some still harboring live ammunition, are now visible in the diminished river.

The drought is taking a huge toll on commerce: Europe's waterways transport about one ton of freight a year for every EU resident and contribute, in terms of transportation alone, roughly [\\$80 billion](#) to the economy. The Rhine is so emaciated today that massive sand bars breach its midsection, rendering fully loaded barges unable to transport coal, diesel, and commodities to the industrial cities of Germany's Ruhr Valley.

The coal and fuel that travel the Rhine and other rivers are particularly vital now in light of Russia's embargoes on gas and coal. And the outages at France's nuclear power plants due to a lack of cooling water have contributed to the soaring price of French electricity, which has shot up to the unheard-of [€900 per megawatt-hour](#)—more than 10 times last year's price.

Scientists say that the economic cost of the rivers' decimation is only part of the problem. The less water in the water system as a whole, explains Gabriel Singer, an ecologist at University of Innsbruck, Austria, the less dilution for salts and the slower a river flows. This leads to higher saline content and higher water temperatures, which can be lethal for many species of riverine life, such as Danube salmon, barbel, and European grayling, among many others.

Higher temperatures also feed algae blooms, Singer explains, which can be toxic for river systems. This is what has happened in several German rivers, including the Moselle and Neckar, as well as perhaps the Oder River, where in mid-August more than [100 metric tons](#) (220,000 pounds) of dead fish—among them perch, catfish, pike, and asp—washed up on its shores within a week. (Experts are currently investigating the cause of the die off.)

Scientists point out that while the predicament of the great rivers of Europe has grabbed the headlines, it is the smaller rivers that suffer disproportionately. "So many of them are completely dried up, not a drop of water left," says Rinke. "When this happens they lose their entire community of biodiversity, forever. It won't just return the next time it rains."

Scientists say that millennia of engineering and human activity along Europe's rivers have also played a role. The straightening of once-wild rivers, deforestation, damming, industrial pollution, wastewater discharges, and agriculture's usurpation of shorelines and wetlands has made Europe's rivers all the more susceptible to heat waves and low-water conditions, as well as floods.

"All of our river systems are highly fragmented and vulnerable," says Singer, underscoring that while the lower Danube is plagued by drought, the upper Danube in Germany and Austria can be at risk of [flooding](#), as happened so spectacularly last July in the Rhine borderlands of Germany and Belgium. The underlying problem, he says, is essentially the same: the inability of highly modified rivers and river basins to hold water for longer periods of time. "Healthy natural ecosystems function as a sponge that gives and takes water, but ours have lost this ability," he says.

Christian Griebler, a limnologist at the University of Vienna, explains: "We lose high amounts of water because rain cannot infiltrate sealed surfaces, and heavy rain after a drought does not infiltrate dry soils. Surface overflow goes into channelized and fast-flowing rivers that hardly communicate with the surrounding aquifers."

Thus, the authorities' reflex reaction—namely to dredge deeper—doesn't address the essential problem, say Singer and Griebler. In fact, it exacerbates it.

Solving the crisis unfolding this summer along Europe's rivers will of course involve the long-term endeavor of slowing global warming. In the short term, scientists say governments need to address other factors stressing the continent's waterways, including enforcing stronger wetland protections.

On that front, some progress is being made, says Singer. Last year, UNESCO established the world's first five-country biosphere reserve along the Mura, Drava, and Danube rivers—a total area of almost 1 million hectares (3,860 square miles).

	<p>The Danube Delta, Europe's largest wetland, has enjoyed such protection since 1998. But the delta's special status has not spared it from the extreme weather. Freshwater springs in the Delta's Letea Forest went dry in August, endangering the lives of Romania's famed wild horses. Officials bulldozed the mud-caked springs, enabling water to flow again and the horses to drink.</p> <p>"Fortunately we still have the glaciers that act as a reserve for the bigger rivers in times of lower precipitation," says Hein. "But climate change modelers say they'll be gone in 30 years. This is extremely worrisome."</p> <p>Robert Lichtner, the Vienna-based coordinator of the European Union's Strategy for the Danube Region, says that adaptation measures ultimately must be part of the basin's future. "We want to slow these processes down, but the extreme weather is not going away," he says. "We'll have to adapt and learn to live with it."</p>
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HEADLINE	10/03 'Unprecedented' numbers bird flu in Europe
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/03/europe-and-uk-hit-by-unprecedented-number-of-bird-flu-cases-this-summer
GIST	<p>The UK and continental Europe have been hit by an "unprecedented" number of cases of avian flu this summer, with 47.5m birds having been culled since last autumn, according to new figures.</p> <p>Poultry producers from as far north as Norway's Svalbard islands to southern Portugal have together reported almost 2,500 outbreaks of the disease since last year.</p> <p>There have also been thousands of outbreaks recorded in wild birds, according to the latest update from the EU's European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. The virus reached breeding colonies of sea birds on the north Atlantic coast, killing huge numbers.</p> <p>In past years, outbreaks of avian flu declined with warmer weather and the end of migration by wild birds in the autumn and winter.</p> <p>But outbreaks have continued across the UK and elsewhere in Europe this summer leading to fears that highly pathogenic variants of avian flu are now endemic in wild birds, creating a risk of infection all year. From June to September, the number of outbreaks in domesticated birds was more than five times higher than the same period last year. Experts say all kinds of bird species have become infected now, causing the virus to remain.</p> <p>Outbreaks have also crossed the Atlantic Ocean, spreading from Europe to North America along migration routes and leading to millions of poultry being culled in the US and Canada.</p> <p>Disease experts say outbreaks could get even worse this winter.</p> <p>"As autumn migration begins and the number of wild birds wintering in Europe increases, they are likely at higher risk of HPAI [highly pathogenic avian influenza] infection than previous years due to the observed persistence of the virus in Europe", said Guilhem de Seze, head of risk assessment at the European Food Safety Authority.</p> <p>Year-round infections in the UK and Europe could force free-range chickens to be housed indoors.</p> <p>Veterinary trials to test bird flu vaccines have started in France and the Netherlands, but there are question marks around the effectiveness of vaccinations against avian flu and whether vaccinated birds can still spread the disease if they are infected.</p> <p>The European Commission has said it wants to allow eggs produced in the EU to be labelled as "free range" even if birds are kept inside.</p>

Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	10/02 Court tosses conviction for drug 'racism'
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3649477/rantz-wa-judges-side-with-accused-drug-dealer-over-ludicrous-claim-of-racism/
GIST	<p>Three judges on the Washington Court of Appeals just overturned a conviction against an accused drug dealer by using woke standards for the term “Mexican ounce,” which they’re misconstruing.</p> <p>Jesus Ibarra-Erives was arrested in the apartment he was living in after officers found a backpack with seven one-ounce “bindles” of methamphetamine and five bindles of heroin with a street value of \$8,000. Police also found a digital scale and a box of plastic sandwich bags.</p> <p>The amount of heroin was slightly less than an ounce — the typical amount of drugs that’s carried with the intent to deliver. To help establish that intent, a detective testified that a “Mexican ounce” is considered 25 grams on the streets. In his closing remarks, prosecutor Adam Sturdivant used the term “Mexican ounce” twice in the context of establishing the intent to deliver.</p> <p>Though there were no objections at the time of the case. Still, using the term “Mexican ounce” was enough to overturn the conviction. This is how the Left dismantles the criminal justice system. The state is less safe as a result.</p> <p>Claims of prejudice</p> <p>During the appeal, Washington Appellate Project attorney Nancy Collins hardly mentioned the alleged prejudicial use of the term “Mexican ounce.” While it was a part of the appeal, she primarily focused on the claim that there was insufficient evidence to suggest the drugs belonged to Ibarra-Erives.</p> <p>When the judges questioned the state, all they wanted to focus on was the “Mexican ounce.”</p> <p>“Could an objective observer who was aware of the history of using race to appeal to bias conclude that the term was used to suggest that it is more likely that heroin packed to a Mexican ounce was done so by a person who is apparently Latinx and speaks Spanish?” Judge Bill Bowman, a Jay Inslee appointee, asked at the appeal.</p> <p>It appears to have been a rhetorical question.</p> <p>Wokeness sides with alleged drug dealer</p> <p>In an 11-page opinion, Bowman, along with judges Janet Chung and Stephen Dwyer, concluded there was enough evidence for the jury to conclude Ibarra-Erives was in possession of drugs. But they reversed his conviction over the use of the term “Mexican ounce.”</p> <p>“Testimony that heroin is packaged in an amount commonly sold on the street is probative of an intent to sell the drugs. But the street term attributing that practice to a particular racial or ethnic group is not,” the judges wrote. “And when the defendant appears to be a member of that same racial or ethnic group, such comments improperly suggest that he is more likely to have packaged or possessed the drugs.”</p> <p>The judges claim the use of “Mexican ounce” was “a suggestion that Ibarra Erives was more likely to have possessed drugs packed to a ‘Mexican ounce’ because he speaks Spanish and appears to be Latinx.”</p> <p>But he <i>had</i> drugs packed to a “Mexican ounce,” according to police.</p> <p>The ‘Latinx’ tell</p>

The judges' use of the political label "Latinx" indicates they were looking for a reason to overturn the conviction. When you're looking for reasons to prove your belief about the criminal justice system — that it's biased against racial minorities — you can and will bend over backward to make your point. It's called confirmation bias.

"Such a suggestion improperly undermines the presumption of innocence by urging the jury to rely on race-based suggestions rather than the evidence to connect Ibarra-Erives to the drugs in the backpack," the judges claimed, even though the prosecutor made no such suggestion.

If you're trying to establish the intent to sell, it makes sense to use widely-used [street slang](#) that makes the point. It's a "Mexican ounce" even if a white, black, or Asian drug dealer is selling the product.

It's all politics

The ruling is laughably inadequate. But judges are forced to get political because of a Washington State Supreme Court ruling by its far-left justices.

The state supreme court ruled in *State v. Zamora* that judges, in race-based misconduct allegations, *must* determine if an objective observer who is "aware of the history of race and ethnic discrimination in the United States and aware of implicit, institutional, and unconscious biases, in addition to purposeful discrimination" *could* view the prosecutor's comments to appeal to the jury's prejudice, bias, or stereotypes.

Thanks to this decision, it's very easy to claim race-based misconduct whenever a prosecutor mentions race. And it lets politically-motivated legal groups like Washington Appellate Project take advantage.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Portland police tackle 4 homicides in 24hrs
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/portland-community-responds-to-four-homicides-in-24-hours-multnomah-county-old-town-southeast-ted-wheeler-kevin-allen-ppb-police#
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. — Portland Police made three arrests after four homicides in a 24-hour time period over the weekend.</p> <p>This spanned from early Friday morning into Saturday, including two stabbings in Old Town, a shooting in Northeast, and a shooting in Southeast.</p> <p>Sergeant Kevin Allen said from investigative units to patrol officers, it was all hands on deck to address the spike in homicides.</p> <p>"Every one of these deaths is significant, but the truth is when they all happen in such a short period of time it compounds, the impact compounds on all of us here in the community," Allen said.</p> <p>Scott Kerman is the executive director at the Blanchet House. Kerman said he's feeling shaken after learning about two stabbings in Old Town in such a short period of time.</p> <p>"We take this very seriously because we want to make sure that people who come to us whether it's to volunteer, our staff, our employees, people who come to us for meals know that they're coming to a safe and supported location," he said.</p> <p>The Blanchet House works with the homeless community in Old Town. Kerman said violence is just another concern for those living on the street.</p> <p>"It just underscores, for us, the terror and the trauma that our unhoused community and our residents in Old Town are facing," he said.</p>

	<p>Allen said PPB is not planning any special missions at the moment, but they are evaluating staffing to see where resources are needed.</p> <p>"We all know that we have a limited number of officers, so we have to deploy them as best we can to the areas that are in most need, but we also know that the city of Portland has a gun violence problem, it has a violence problem, it has a traffic fatality problem," he said.</p> <p>Several local leaders responded to the violence on social media. Mayor Ted Wheeler tweeted that he sends his condolences to the loved ones left in the wake of this family. He also expressed gratitude for Portland Police and the arrests they made.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Aberdeen schools close for online threats
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/classes-canceled-monday-students-aberdeen-school-district-due-online-threats/63DHDY6DMNABNLNCA5VNPZSATI/
GIST	<p>ABERDEEN, Wash. — School has been canceled for all students in the Aberdeen School District on Monday due to online threats, Superintendent Jeffrey Thake announced Sunday evening. After-school activities and sports were also canceled.</p> <p>Police and district officials are investigating threatening messages that were posted on one of Aberdeen High School's social media accounts.</p> <p>"Posting threatening statements is not acceptable and it's against the law," Thake said. "The safety of our students and staff is our highest priority. We take threats seriously and I am grateful to the Aberdeen Police Department for launching an investigation right away and working with us to identify the suspect."</p> <p>Thake said the district is also concerned about the mental health of the students and staff and wants any students who might be experiencing anxiety due to the messages to contact the school counselor or a trusted adult.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Stockton police hunt suspected serial killer
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/stockton-police-search-apparent-serial-killer-tied-murders/story?id=90849014
GIST	<p>Five unprovoked murders in the past several months appear to be the work of one person, according to the Stockton, California, Police Department.</p> <p>Authorities are searching for a person of interest tied to the five slayings, the first of which occurred on July 8. All of the victims were men and all were alone at the time they were fatally shot, police said.</p> <p>The killings all happened at night or in the early morning hours.</p> <p>Police released only a few details about the string of murders and when they happened: a 35-year-old man fatally shot at 12:31 a.m. on July 8; a 43-year-old man fatally shot at 9:49 p.m. on Aug. 11; a 21-year-old man fatally shot at 6:41 a.m. on Aug. 30; a 52-year-old man fatally shot at 4:27 a.m. on Sept. 21; and a 54-year-old man fatally shot at 1:53 a.m. on Sept. 27.</p> <p>Stockton police told ABC News that all of the victims were ambushed, none were robbed and none were drug- or gang-related. Police also told ABC News that they have physical evidence linking the five crime scenes together.</p> <p>None of the victims were publicly identified by police, but the family of the most recent victim identified him as Lorenzo Lopez, according to Sacramento ABC affiliate KXTV.</p>

"He was just a person who was out here at the wrong place at the wrong time at the wrong circumstance," his brother Jerry Lopez told KXTV. "It's hard to process that this has happened. I mean, me and my brother have been like twins. We were a year apart so we were pretty close."

Another victim's mother, Greta Bogrow, confirmed to ABC News that her son, Paul Alexander Yaw, 35, was killed on July 8, 2022, on the 5600 block of Kermit Lane.

"He was a good boy who grew into a good man with a big heart. He will always live on in our hearts. He was always there for you if you needed him," the family said in a statement provided to ABC News. "He was a son, brother, father, grandson, nephew and cousin. I still can't believe he's not coming back. I hope this helps to catch the person(s) responsible."

The city of Stockton said it was putting forward a \$75,000 reward for information leading to an arrest in the investigation. Stockton Crime Stoppers is posting an additional \$10,000 reward.

The day after Lopez's killing, Stockton police had said at a press conference they were not sure if the string of killings were related.

"[We're] still looking at it from a random point of view, but we do see some similarities," Police Chief Stanley McFadden said Wednesday. "We have been provided absolutely zero evidence that leads us to believe that one individual is running rampant in the city of Stockton killing people."

But that changed two days later when the department tied the five killings together and released an image of a person of interest.

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HEADLINE	10/02 Migrant smuggling economy tops \$20B
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/2/cartels-collect-26-billion-smuggling-profit-border/
GIST	<p>The migrant smuggling economy at the U.S.-Mexico border now tops \$20 billion and the cartels have made at least \$2.6 billion in profit over the past 12 months just from controlling the routes illegal immigrants use, according to a Washington Times analysis.</p> <p>Both amounts are up substantially from the Trump and Obama years because more people are coming to the border and because they are paying higher prices.</p> <p>Mexican migrants are paying an average of \$8,600 in total smuggling fees this year, according to The Washington Times' database of smuggling cases. That's up roughly \$2,000 from 2019, the last pre-pandemic year under the Trump administration. Migrants from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are paying about \$11,500 for the trip, up from \$9,000 in 2020 and \$7,900 in 2019, The Times' data shows.</p> <p>Those rates are averages across the southern border. Migrants pay a little less in parts of Texas and a little more in California.</p> <p>"There's an inflationary pressure on the number," said Ronald Vitiello, a former chief of the Border Patrol. "Everything else being equal, things are more expensive. Employees, gasoline, logistics — things are more expensive."</p> <p>The migrant surge that began at the start of the Biden administration is still going strong 20 months later. The numbers paint a grim picture of how the surge has fattened the wallets of the cartels that control the smuggling economy.</p> <p>One yardstick is the mafia fee, or "piso" — literally, the tax — migrants pay to cartels to use their routes into the U.S. Nearly every migrant pays, and the rate has increased to \$1,300 per person. That is up more than 50%, from about \$850 in the Trump years.</p>

The Border Patrol nabbed nearly 2.2 million people trying to sneak into the country from Mexico over the past 12 months. Subtracting repeat crossers who may have paid only once for multiple attempts, adding in estimated “gotaways” who avoid capture, and figuring conservatively that 90% of migrants pay the piso means the cartels have made \$2.6 billion over the past year on crossing fees alone.

That’s free and clear profit just for use of their smuggling routes. Any money they make from the rest of the smuggling journey, such as operating stash houses or coordinating foot guides and drivers, comes on top of that.

“They’re printing money,” Mr. Vitiello said.

All the extra money is bad news for the U.S., said former Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf.

He told The Times’ “Politically Unstable” podcast that the cash helps fuel cartels’ other deadly activities, such as producing and smuggling in fentanyl, the synthetic opioid that is responsible for record drug overdose deaths in the U.S.

“It’s all the same enterprise,” Mr. Wolf said. “So the money that they make on the human trafficking, the \$10,000 to \$12,000 per head, they’re using to either import from China or make fentanyl and push that across the border.”

Mr. Vitiello said the cartels are cashing in under President Biden.

“Reasonable people can understand this has a shelf life,” he said. “They’re taking advantage of the maximum flow because they know it’s not going to last.”

The \$20 billion for the total smuggling economy includes the money migrants pay to the recruiters in their home countries, those who shepherd them to the U.S. border, foot or raft guides who get them across the boundary, stash house operators who shelter them on the U.S. side and drivers who take them deeper into the U.S.

The gross domestic product of Honduras or El Salvador is less than \$30 billion.

Border monopoly

A simple supply-and-demand curve might suggest prices should be falling. The pool of migrants is larger, meaning a bigger supply for the smugglers to share.

That doesn’t account for the cartels’ monopolies. The cartels control ground and all the activities that go through there, including drug and migrant smuggling, and they set the prices they want.

Victor Manjarrez, a longtime Border Patrol agent who now teaches at the University of Texas at El Paso, said there is a logic to how prices are established, though the smugglers don’t exactly advertise their thinking.

In general, those from Mexico pay the least and those from the Northern Triangle countries of Central America pay a couple of thousand dollars more per person.

The going rate for a Mexican to cross in Laredo, Texas, is \$7,400, up from about \$6,400 in 2020 and \$5,900 a year before. Someone from Honduras or Guatemala crossing through Laredo is paying about \$10,000, up from \$7,700 in 2019.

Those from South America might pay closer to \$20,000, and those from outside the hemisphere can pay even more.

Other factors contribute to the exact price.

Those willing to walk more often pay less. Making a five-day trek through the deserts of Arizona or the Otay Mountain Wilderness in Southern California saves thousands of dollars compared with getting bused to the border, hopping across, and quickly getting picked up and driven north.

Even more expensive is being crammed into a trunk or a modified gas tank and brought through a border crossing or stuck on the back of personal watercraft and ridden up the California coast. Mexican migrants can pay more than \$15,000 for those trips. Chinese migrants have told officers that they paid more than \$50,000 for their journey.

“It’s based on level of comfort, mode of transportation, how quick you want to do it,” Mr. Manjarrez said.

He said wealthier migrants from more urban areas are willing to pay for a few hours of serious discomfort in a car trunk over the days-long, life-threatening slog through the desert.

Smugglers also have adapted to the new conditions on the border. Because of the Biden administration’s leniency, many illegal immigrants from beyond Mexico are hoping to get caught. They believe, usually correctly, that they will be quickly released.

Mr. Manjarrez said smugglers coach migrants on how to take advantage of the Biden policies, such as by lodging claims for political asylum, as part of their package.

What particularly troubles him are the implications that a migrant from a country where the average annual income is \$5,000 manages to pay \$10,000 for the trip.

“Most of these folks who are crossing usually come from the poorest of the poor in their country. So these fees get paid, but then you get the exploitation,” Mr. Manjarrez said.

The lucky migrants end up owing relatives already in the U.S. The unlucky ones have to work off their debts to the smuggling cartels in any way they can.

The Biden administration recognized the dangers of the smuggling networks and announced a major initiative to try to detect and arrest the smuggling leaders.

In a major raid this month, authorities said, they unraveled an organization working in the Laredo area to bring migrants across the border to Texas and up to San Antonio, where they could fan out to destinations throughout the country.

The organization charged about \$8,000 per person. Migrants were smuggled in suitcases stuffed inside pickup trucks, stacked inside empty water tanker trucks or sealed into wooden crates strapped to flatbed trailers, according to court documents.

Prosecutors said the organization raked in “at least millions of dollars in proceeds,” and they specifically traced \$2.3 million that they were seeking to forfeit as proceeds from the smuggling venture.

Border security experts commended those efforts but said it’s not a substitute for policies that discourage the flow of people.

‘The borders are open’

The Times’ database uses affidavits filed by Border Patrol agents, Customs and Border Patrol officers and Homeland Security Investigations agents in border smuggling cases in which there are witnesses — namely migrants who were being smuggled. The authorities often elicit the smuggling fees the migrants pay and include that information in the affidavit.

The Times’ calculations are based on those numbers.

Juan Jose Reyes-Mazariegos, who was arrested by the Border Patrol on Interstate 10 in Arizona on Sept. 13, told agents he paid roughly \$13,000 for his trip. That's 50,000 Guatemalan quetzals — about \$6,400 — to go from Guatemala to the U.S. border, \$6,000 for crossing and smuggling fees, and \$700 to get him from Phoenix to New York.

Jesus Ivan Garcia-Torres, a Mexican pulled from the water off the coast of California after he was dumped from a personal watercraft he rode across the international boundary, said he paid 120,000 pesos, or roughly \$6,000, for his trip. It was the second time he was caught that week.

Last week, agents nabbed Deylin Denisel Salazar-Enriquez, a Guatemalan woman, as she was being driven through a checkpoint outside Laredo. She told agents that a family member was paying \$23,000 to have her smuggled to North Carolina.

That price is exceptionally high. The court documents didn't shed light on the reasons.

The Times calculated the cartels' mafia fee income by taking the total number of people arrested by the Border Patrol over the previous 12 months and adjusting for recidivists and gotaways who were never captured.

The Times calculated that 90% of migrants pay a mafia fee — some experts say the rate is closer to 100%, while others say it's lower, in part because the cartel in the Del Rio area doesn't charge a piso.

Together, that amounts to a little more than 2 million payments over 12 months. At \$1,300 per payment, that works out to \$2.6 billion.

Getting a handle on the exact size of the smuggling picture is tricky, but The Times used rough approximations from its data. Of the illegal immigrants caught by Border Patrol agents this year, about 34% are Mexican, 24% are from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, and the rest are from elsewhere.

Using the average payment rates for Mexicans, that works out to roughly \$6 billion. The Central Americans account for \$5.6 billion.

The Times' database doesn't have enough data points from other nationalities to make firm calculations, and the Department of Homeland Security doesn't release granular data on the full scope of illegal crossings of those nationalities.

Assuming they pay the same rate per person as the Central Americans — likely a low estimate — that works out to another \$9.5 billion.

That adds up to roughly \$20 billion in total smuggling fees.

Urbino "Benny" Martinez, the sheriff of Brooks County, Texas, said those numbers challenge Vice President Kamala Harris' recent assertion that the border is secure.

"The borders are open, and the volume is high. The cartels are just taking advantage of it," he said.

Enriching the cartels is more than a matter of money.

Experts say the cartels control every facet of the border environment, turning the U.S. into a reactionary force.

Cartels determine who crosses where, and they use the people as distractions. The migrants occupy Border Patrol agents' attention in one spot while more valuable cargo — drugs or higher-value people — go through the border elsewhere.

	<p>That makes the cartels' growing financial power more troubling, Mr. Vitiello said.</p> <p>"It gives them the ability to further destabilize Mexico," Mr. Vitiello said. "It also speaks to their business model. There's lots of talk about demand in the U.S. and legalization and decriminalization. Let's just say we changed national policy about crossing borders. You think they wouldn't do something else just as lucrative?"</p>
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HEADLINE	10/02 Fentanyl fuels downtown Seattle crime
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/new-drug-fuels-street-crime-at-3rd-pine-but-seattle-police-patrols-help-neighbors-say/
GIST	<p>Black tar heroin used to be the drug of choice in downtown Seattle, but that's no longer true.</p> <p>Bits of tinfoil, with black "snail trails" marking a pill's skittering path across aluminum, are now windblown against chain link and brick, mostly replacing the orange caps and discarded needles that used to litter downtown alleys.</p> <p>"I don't think heroin is quite the drug it used to be," said Capt. Steve Strand, commander of the Seattle Police Department's West Precinct. "Fentanyl is really the leader of all of the drugs we're seeing."</p> <p>It's been a little over six months since Seattle police launched an operation that first targeted open-air drug use at 12th Avenue South and South Jackson Street in the Chinatown International District, then focused on seizing drugs, illegal weapons and stolen merchandise from the area around Third Avenue and Pine Street in the downtown retail core.</p> <p>Strand figured that disrupting the drug market at 12th and Jackson would be fairly straightforward because the activity wasn't anchored in the neighborhood and there was no specific reason for people to gather there. But he thought Third and Pine — with its confluence of tourism destinations, retail stores and public transit, as well as the area's long history as a hub of drug and criminal activity — would require a longer, concentrated push to reduce illicit behavior and improve public safety.</p> <p>He was right on both fronts.</p> <p>The crowds that used to gather at 12th and Jackson haven't returned. And while public safety problems persist throughout the Chinatown ID, Strand said the recent removal of an encampment near the troubled intersection, moving 40 people into housing, has helped further curb street disorder there.</p> <p>Meanwhile, downtown residents say the police emphasis — along with the closure of a troubled bus stop, stepped-up street cleaning and graffiti removal, and the introduction of more public art — has incrementally improved conditions. The number of drug users who congregated along stretches of Third Avenue a year ago has noticeably thinned, with smaller groups now stretching along Third from roughly Pine to Yesler Way.</p> <p>There are still pockets of open drug and alcohol use, particularly on Pike Street and in the alleys off Pike between Second and Fourth avenues, but the violence, thefts, fights and screams of distress have all seemingly lessened.</p> <p>"In the broadest sense, it seems like the craziness collapsed by almost two-thirds," said Mark DeWeirdt, who lives in a condominium building on Second Avenue. "We've still got a lot to go. But, yeah, we are leaning in the right direction. My wife [is no longer saying] 'I've got to get out of here' every single week."</p> <p>DeWeirdt is hopeful conditions will continue to improve and credits city leaders for the positive changes he's noticed, but said he doesn't want to see downtown backslide into the chaos that reigned during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

Though the streets feel safer, DeWeirdt said those who remain are a rougher, meaner crowd who seem more entrenched in criminal activity.

“There are still so many opportunities for those bad things to happen because there’s still so much of it out there,” he said.

Fentanyl fueling street crime

Downtown residents still catch whiffs of urine, still wake to the sounds of gunfire and sirens, though not quite as often as they did six or 12 months ago. They still occasionally see syringes hanging from the arms of those who gather near Third and Pine, but they’re more likely to see the bent-over figures of people high on fentanyl, oblivious to the world around them.

The street drug, both in powder form and pressed into M-30 pills known as “blues,” is driving much of downtown’s lawlessness and retail theft, said Strand, the West Precinct captain. The pills are heated on pieces of tinfoil, and the smoke is sucked in with straws.

Strand speculated that fentanyl has surpassed black tar heroin as Seattle’s predominant street drug because it’s less expensive and easier to manufacture and smuggle.

The pills are cheap, selling for as little as \$2 or \$3 apiece, with prices continuing to fall, he said. They produce a stronger high than heroin but last only about 20 minutes, so most people addicted to the drug need 30 to 40 hits a day.

“It’s such a horrible, strong drug that really affects their mental well-being,” Strand said. “You can drive down the street and see somebody who has obviously just used ... fentanyl and can barely stand and is bent over and looks like they’re about ready to collapse, and when you come back in the other direction 15 minutes later, they’re up and walking around like nothing happened. Then they’re back to finding the next one.”

The addiction fuels a cycle of theft, with stolen merchandise sold or traded for more drugs, he said.

“Target is our top location in the West Precinct for crime,” Strand said of the retail giant at Second Avenue and Union Street, where police have partnered with loss-prevention officers on anti-theft operations. “It’s really sad how frequent it is.”

Crime data comparing 2022 with previous years is difficult to parse because 2020 and 2021 were so unusual and saw a spike in violent crime across the city. But police and residents say the overt lawlessness seen downtown at the peak of the pandemic has been tamped down.

And while there is some data illustrating the effectiveness of the current police operation, it’s incomplete, a consequence of a staffing crisis that has seen more than 400 officers leave the department over the past two years, said Lt. Rob Brown, the operation commander for SPD’s downtown emphasis. Staffing problems have also restricted the number of undercover operations police can conduct, Brown said, limiting the drugs, stolen goods and guns seized during investigations.

But the available data still paints a picture of what officers are encountering.

Over roughly 12 weeks — from April to early June and mid-August to mid-September — police seized more than 2,100 “blues” and 98 grams of fentanyl in the area around Third and Pine, compared with about 16 grams of heroin and 31 grams of methamphetamine.

Officers made nearly 140 arrests for new offenses and outstanding misdemeanor and felony warrants in that time and confiscated knives, handguns, BB guns, machetes, brass knuckles and, in one case, a large ax, according to SPD reports.

Thieves hit one fine art business twice this spring, first stealing a \$19,000 mammoth tusk in April, and a month later, taking \$9,000 worth of merchandise and causing an estimated \$10,000 in property damage, according to the reports.

Officers have recovered some stolen property, ranging from jeans and shoes to paper towels and liquor, as well as wireless earphones, suitcases, a weed trimmer, camp stove and a power washer that a man claimed to have bought in an alley for \$80.

Police have responded to violent assaults, and an officer witnessed a homicide at Third and Pike in August. A few weeks ago, officers backed up medics who were unable to save a person who overdosed in a bus shelter.

While King County Jail officials continue to limit bookings to people arrested on suspicion of felony offenses, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and misdemeanor domestic-violence assault, Strand said officials recently agreed to book people whose names appear on the Seattle city attorney's list of 100 or so repeat misdemeanor offenders — and those cases are now being prosecuted more quickly.

And while police can cite people for smoking drugs in bus shelters or within 25 feet of doorways, Strand said SPD doesn't have a system for tracking those people, who under a new state law can only be arrested after twice being diverted to drug treatment programs.

Officers are still referring people to social service providers as part of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, known as LEAD, but Strand worries those providers are nearing capacity.

That's why SPD continues to focus its downtown efforts on arresting people selling drugs, committing violent crimes and engaging in predatory behavior, he said.

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office filed 35 felony drug dealing charges against 33 defendants arrested by Seattle police at or near Third and Pike between January and August, according to spokesperson Casey McNerthney. Twenty-four cases involved the sale of fentanyl, six involved meth, four involved crack cocaine and one involved heroin, he said.

Of the 33 defendants, 10 were also charged with felony gun crimes.

"It's slow, but it's happening"

Three patrol SUVs sped south on Third on a recent Wednesday as Strand and Brown walked the retail core, stopping occasionally to check on people or tell them they can't have drug paraphernalia on the street.

"The Triple Door has been hit a few times with windows being broken. Wild Ginger is open and Benaroya Hall recently reopened," Strand said, naming a music venue, restaurant and performance hall as Brown stepped away to find out what prompted the lights and sirens. "I really want to provide that safety so businesses reopen."

"That call was a street robbery down around Yesler," Brown said after hanging up. "They have a victim, they have suspect information and it just occurred."

The police commanders popped into Tiger Sugar, the first of a popular Taiwanese bubble tea franchise to open in the state. Open only a couple of months, the employee tip jar was stolen three times during the first two weeks of August.

"Sometimes when we open, we have to ask people to leave our gated area, and they sometimes come in and harass customers," said manager Jimmy Bach. "We've had to bolt down some of our items."

Bach said the bubble tea chain may have overlooked crime on Third when choosing the location but said he had “no regrets” and that the public safety problems are “something we can overcome” with help from police and city officials.

Later, as Strand and Brown posed for a photo with a couple from Louisiana, a man walked by and criticized downtown policing with a string of expletives.

The visitors’ take?

“You’ve got a much busier, cleaner city,” said Len Slidell, who last visited Seattle 27 years ago and was in town with his wife Evelyn for an Alaskan cruise. Asked if he felt safe downtown, Slidell shrugged and said, “We’ve been OK [but] we’re seeing a lot of homeless people.”

Minutes after the couple continued their downtown tour, Seattle resident James Braddy stopped Brown to see if his referral to the LEAD program had been approved. Brown, who had signed off on the referral earlier in the day, sent him to the Belltown offices of a social service agency that provides housing and other help to LEAD participants.

Though the idea of opening a downtown police substation is being kicked around, with a variety of offers from property owners, “our chief says he’d rather have us out here interacting with people than behind glass,” Strand said.

“With short staffing, we just can’t staff it 24/7, and if it says ‘police’ on the doors, we don’t want to have it locked.”

Strand and Brown are constantly assessing where drug use and crime displaced from Third and Pine are cropping up — and moving officers to those emerging hot spots — as part of SPD’s plan to continue its downtown operation for “the foreseeable future,” Strand said.

“We have officers out here all night and all day, running from one place to the next,” Strand said. “Today, you’ve noticed a lot of police officers and not a lot of bad behavior.”

Leslie Buker, who lives in a condo on Third Avenue between Pike and Pine, said she now recognizes and exchanges smiles with officers working the downtown operation.

“Just having more police out here is not just to tell people to stop doing things,” she said. “They’re having conversations and engagements, and so many people walk up and talk to the police.”

Buker said despite fires constantly set in the alley behind her building, downtown public safety has improved since two people were killed by gunfire in four days at Third and Pine last winter. She’s looking forward to Uniqlo, a Japanese clothing brand, moving into the old Macy’s building, and completion of a new development at Third and Virginia Street. Boards are starting to come off windows, she said, but it can still be scary walking home at night.

“It’s slow, but it’s happening,” Buker said of the changes in her neighborhood. “A lot of people fled during the pandemic, so anything that can bring them back is awesome.”

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HEADLINE	10/02 Multiple shootings in Seattle: 5 injured
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/five-injured-in-multiple-shootings-in-seattle/
GIST	<p>Shots were fired across Seattle early Sunday morning in yet another weekend night of gun violence.</p> <p>Around 1 a.m., four people were wounded in a shooting on the 4300 block of University Way, near the popular Flowers Bar & Restaurant, according to an item in the Seattle Police Department’s online blotter.</p>

	<p>Two man began to fight outside the bar, when one pulled out a gun and fired three to five rounds, then fled, witnesses told police. No suspect has been arrested as of Sunday morning.</p> <p>The victims were taken to Harborview Medical Center with non-life threatening injures, and one has since been released.</p> <p>Police also responded to reports of gunshots in the Chinatown International District around 2:30 a.m. where four cars and two buildings were damages by the more than two dozen shots fired.</p> <p>Almost simultaneously, a man was shot in the leg near Pioneer Square, telling officers he was shot by an unknown man when attempting to stop a fight between two strangers.</p> <p>No arrests have been made in either of the cases and all remain active investigations.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Reno police: car street takeovers; crashes, arrests
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/hundreds-cars-pack-nevada-streets-illegal-stunts-90840626
GIST	<p>RENO, Nev. -- Thousands of people in hundreds of cars took over northern Nevada parking lots and intersections Friday night and into Saturday, performing stunts in souped-up vehicles and leading to crashes and arrests, police said.</p> <p>Police beefed up nighttime staffing after social media posts urged people from San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, to come to the “sideshow” in Reno, Police Lt. Michael Browett said.</p> <p>The disturbances started late Friday as several hundred cars and their occupants met in the parking lot of a still-open Walmart store. Police tried to break up the crowds and drivers sped off, meeting up again at several intersections and industrial parks into Saturday morning. A dozen people were arrested, 14 cars impounded and 33 people were issued citations.</p> <p>Browett said Reno is just the latest city to see late-night takeovers by auto enthusiasts who ignore law enforcement efforts to stop the illegal and dangerous activity.</p> <p>“I don't know the underlying movement is with this group, but it goes a little beyond cars,” Browett said. “They're very anti-authoritarian, and they basically just show up and do whatever they want.”</p> <p>Cities across the country have been dealing with similar issues in recent years, including Phoenix, San Francisco and Chicago. Last weekend, three people were killed and several others badly hurt in crashes related to a pop-up sideshow in Wildwood, New Jersey.</p> <p>In Reno, no one was seriously injured. But Browett said those arrested faces charges including reckless driving, hit and run causing injury and weapons possession.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Tulsa OK football game shooting: 1 dead
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/science-sports-football-shootings-tulsa-f33fb887ec24f6c861a33ccad6c25a69
GIST	<p>TULSA, Okla. (AP) — A teenager was killed and another was wounded in a shooting at a high school homecoming football game in Oklahoma Friday night, police said.</p> <p>The victims, both 17, were shot during the event at McLain High School for Science and Technology shortly before 10 p.m., according to a statement by the Tulsa Police Department posted on Twitter and Facebook.</p> <p>“When Officers arrived, we found two victims amongst the crowd of hundreds. One 17-year-old male was pronounced dead at the scene,” the post said.</p>

	<p>The surviving victim was taken to a hospital in critical condition but has improved to stable condition, the statement said.</p> <p>Several officers and a K-9 unit searched nearby neighborhoods but were not immediately able to find the suspected shooter, who ran away from the scene, police said.</p> <p>Police said the suspect is believed to be another 17-year-old.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 NY high school football game shooting
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/10/01/new-york-three-shot-high-school-football-game/6141664649663/
GIST	<p>Oct. 1 (UPI) -- Three people were shot following a high school football game in upstate Newburgh, N.Y. on Friday night, according to police.</p> <p>All three shooting victims are expected to survive their injuries, sustained in the parking lot of the Newburgh Free Academy campus in Orange County, N.Y., about 65 miles north of New York City.</p> <p>A fight broke out following the game at around 9:30 p.m. EDT, according to police.</p> <p>At least five gunshots were fired. A 43-year-old woman was hit in the foot, a 17-year-old girl was shot in the thigh and a 21-year-old man was shot in the ankle, Newburgh police Chief Anthony Geraci said during a briefing.</p> <p>The game was against the visiting Warwick Valley High School. located in Warwick, N.Y., approximately 29 miles away.</p> <p>Around 2,000 people attended the game at the outdoor field and many of them were leaving at the time the shots were fired.</p> <p>"It's unacceptable. We're fed up with the gun violence in this community. The trauma that is being inflicted upon our youth in this community has to stop and it has to stop with all of us as one community," Geraci told reporters.</p> <p>No arrests had been made as of Saturday morning and police had not publicly identified any suspects, nor had they speculated on what may have caused the fight.</p> <p>Over 100 law enforcement personnel from 17 agencies were on the scene investigating Friday night.</p> <p>"Last night there was a shooting incident on the grounds on one of our high school campuses, outside of the security perimeter for an event taking place," Newburgh Free Academy said in a statement on the school's website.</p> <p>"We are thankful for the quick and thorough response of our local law enforcement agencies and security personnel. At this time, there is limited information that we can provide as we wait for a thorough investigation to be conducted."</p> <p>Warwick Valley High said none of its fans, players or coaches were injured.</p> <p>"This (Friday) evening, it was reported that five gunshots were fired in Newburgh Free Academy's back parking lot following the Warwick-Newburgh football game, injuring two residents of Newburgh," the school said in a statement on its website.</p> <p>"Fortunately, our football and cheerleading teams arrived home safely in Warwick a little more than an hour ago. This evening's events were certainly alarming. Please be aware that until further notice, the</p>

	Warwick Valley Central School District will not be taking part in any sports or extracurricular activities in Newburgh. Our thoughts remain with all those impacted by this evening's events."
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HEADLINE	10/01 PLU man w/gun call: PCSD respond 80min.
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/man-with-gun-puts-plu-campus-into-lockdown-deputies-take-more-than-an-hour-to-respond
GIST	<p>PARKLAND, WA - FOX 13 News is digging into why it took law enforcement more than an hour to respond to a 911 call for a report of a man with a gun, that put a local college on lockdown.</p> <p>The incident happened last Wednesday near Pacific Lutheran University's campus.</p> <p>At around 3:00 p.m., campus safety received a report of a man with a gun entering the school grounds.</p> <p>They called 911.</p> <p>South Sound 911 put a broadcast out exactly one minute after the call came in. However, it took Pierce County Sheriff's Deputies about an hour and twenty minutes to respond to the campus.</p> <p>"A school full of students. Like, if this had been a serious, like, case why wouldn't you, like, hurry," said Thea Oeverby.</p> <p>Oeverby is a freshman at PLU. She says she has only been the United States for about five weeks. She is from Norway, thousands of miles away from home, and had to sit in her room alone for the two-hour lockdown.</p> <p>"It was very scary, because I've never experienced something like that," she said. "You can't really help but to think the worst. So, your thoughts are everywhere. You don't know what to do, what to think," she said.</p> <p>Oeverby asked why it took deputies so long to respond.</p> <p>Officials with the Pierce County Sheriff's Department tell FOX 13 News when the broadcast went out there were no available deputies.</p> <p>They also tell us the broadcast did not have an alert tone.</p> <p>According to officials with South Sound 911, an alert tone is associated with the dispatching of an emergency event.</p> <p>FOX 13 News asked officials with South Sound 911 why the PLU lockdown did not warrant an emergency tone.</p> <p>Scott Hamel, deputy director of support services for South Sound 911, says when the broadcast first went out dispatch was unaware of the lockdown.</p> <p>"What we could have, or should have done, was to provide an additional radio broadcast update to let the units in the area know the campus was in lockdown, and that did not happen during the initial timeframe of the report," said Hamel.</p> <p>FOX 13 News asked Hamel what, if any, changes will come after this situation.</p> <p>"This event has been a catalyst for us to have conversation. We're going to be discussing, and have already reached out, and had conversation with the security at PLU, as well as reviewing with our agencies who determine the response protocols," he said.</p>

	<p>The Washington State Patrol (WSP) reports the man who reportedly had a gun near the campus was fleeing from a hit-and-run that happened a few blocks away at 112th Street South and Pacific Avenue South.</p> <p>WSP officials say that man reportedly caused the hit-and-run, fled the scene, and ditched his car at 123rd Street South and Park Avenue South - right along PLU's campus.</p> <p>Authorities say the suspect was allegedly carrying an AR-15, and the car he was driving was stolen.</p> <p>There is no video of the incident, or evidence of the man with the gun. Pierce County Deputies say there is no crime they can confirm, other than the stolen vehicle. Because of this, there is no investigation.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/01 Using DNA without consent to solve crimes
SOURCE	https://nypost.com/2022/10/01/how-police-can-use-your-dna-to-solve-crimes-without-consent/
GIST	<p>It was December of 2014, and Michael Usry had no idea why a pair of Louisiana State police officers showed up at his New Orleans home, asking him to accompany them to the precinct for questioning.</p> <p>He was even more confused when an FBI agent asked to swab his cheek for DNA.</p> <p>“They wouldn’t tell me anything,” Usry, now 43, tells The Post. “I was like, ‘Am I being accused of a crime? Do I need a lawyer?’ ”</p> <p>It was only later that Usry, a low-budget filmmaker, learned he was a suspect in the 1996 murder of 18-year-old Angie Dodge. There were a few things that pointed to him: He’d visited Idaho Falls, Idaho, where the victim was killed, during the same time frame of the murder. He had directed a 2010 film called “Murderabilia,” which — according to the search warrant — “dealt with some sort of homicide or killings.”</p> <p>But the main reason cops showed up on Usry’s doorstep was his DNA. When genetic evidence from the crime scene didn’t match anything in the national law-enforcement database, the police ran a familial DNA search on Ancestry.com, the world’s largest for-profit genealogy company.</p> <p>They found a close match between semen found at the murder scene and the DNA of Usry’s dad, who had donated his saliva to Ancestry as part of a genealogy project with his church. When the elder Usry was deemed too old to be a suspect, it led detectives to his son. Although the younger Usry had never used Ancestry or any other genealogy service, his dad’s DNA was enough for a judge to issue a warrant.</p> <p>Even after Usry’s DNA was tested and his name cleared — which took weeks — he didn’t rest easy.</p> <p>“I know that my personal genetic information is still in the FBI criminal database,” he said. “They’re not going to just throw it away because of their mistake. But what are they doing with it?”</p> <p>Use of direct-to-consumer DNA tests have exploded over the past decade, with an estimated 100 million people worldwide sharing their genetic information with companies like AncestryDNA, 23andMe, and FamilyTreeDNA. All that DNA has been a boon to law-enforcement agencies, who’ve discovered that “investigative genetic genealogy” is far more effective if searches aren’t restricted to DNA left at a crime scene.</p> <p>By just uploading the genetic profile of a suspect to a genealogy website, where thousands of users have freely shared their DNA information to find out more about their ancestry, detectives are able to map out a criminal’s entire family tree and zero in on their identity.</p> <p>A number of success stories have emerged from this tactic, most famously Joseph James DeAngelo — the so-called “Golden State Killer,” a serial killer and rapist who terrorized California during the late ’70s and</p>

early '80s — who was finally caught in 2018 when crime scene [DNA was partially matched](#) to the murderer's great-great-great-grandparents with online genealogy database GEDmatch. More recently, these public databases helped solve the [60-year-old murder of a Girl Scout in Colorado](#), a 1975 [stabbing in Lancaster](#), Pa., and uncovered the identities of both [a killer and his victim](#) from 1988.

Americans are mostly in favor of this new crime-solving tool, with 48% saying it's fine for DNA companies to share customers' genetic data with police, and just a third objecting to the idea, according to a [Pew Research study](#) from June 2020.

Mitch Morrissey, a former District Attorney in Denver, Colo., thinks the public is right not to be alarmed. At the moment, he said, only two commercial DNA databases can be accessed by law enforcement: GEDmatch and FamilyTreeDNA. And their privacy policies require users to opt out if they're uncomfortable with their information being used. "It's a 100% voluntary system," Morrissey said. (Meanwhile, after Ancestry was used by police to find Usry's father, the free searchable database was discontinued because, [according to the company](#), it'd "been used for purposes other than that [for] which it was intended.")

But others, like Albert Fox Cahn, the executive director of the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project, find these database searches "not just invasive but unconstitutional."

Recent controversies back him up. Earlier this year, the San Francisco police department [got caught](#) using DNA collected from sexual assault victims to identify them as suspects in unrelated property crimes. And detectives have used blood collected from newborns to investigate criminal cases everywhere from [California](#) to [New Jersey](#).

And those are just the cases we know about. "It's the Wild West," said Cahn. "We have no idea how these tools are being used."

Brandy Jennings of Vancouver, Wash., wasn't sure what to think when, in early 2019, she started getting Facebook messages from strangers, congratulating her on helping to solve a murder from four decades earlier.

"My first emotion was confusion," she told The Post. "I was happy but confused."

The murder, she soon learned, was a brutal stabbing of an 18-year-old girl in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, back in 1979. The case remained unsolved until investigators matched Jennings' DNA — which she'd uploaded to GEDmatch a few years earlier, to learn more about her late father's family — to DNA evidence found at the crime scene.

This genetic paper trail led them to the killer, 65-year-old small business owner Jerry Lynn Burns from Manchester, Iowa, and a distant second cousin to Jennings that she'd never met or even knew existed.

At least in hindsight, Jennings, a 40-something home health-care assistant, says it "feels like an invasion of privacy" that police used her genetic information without her knowledge, but "I figured I just didn't read the terms and conditions of the site and it was my own doing."

She's more concerned that she wasn't eligible for the \$10,000 reward offered by the victim's family for information leading to an arrest. "I could really have used that \$10,000," she said.

The US Department of Justice tried to set guidelines for investigative genetic genealogy in 2019, requiring "informed consent" from non-suspects before their DNA can be collected. But the policy mainly covers cases involving federal authorities like the FBI.

"FBI agents may only ask for matches from companies that tell their consumers they allow law enforcement access, which narrows down the available databases considerably," said Christopher

Slobogin, director of Vanderbilt Law School's criminal justice program, who's studied the Fourth Amendment and privacy issues for 30 years.

But on a state level, well, it depends. "As the Golden State Killer case demonstrated, if police are otherwise at a dead end, they will certainly be tempted to resort to whatever the law allows them to do with DNA samples," said Slobogin.

While the federal policy requires that third-party reference samples should be "promptly destroy(ed)" after an investigation, whether they actually do depends on who you ask.

"When it comes to police use of our DNA, my policy is to distrust, but verify," said Cahn. "Sadly, many departments lack any meaningful verification of their compliance with DNA rules. Even worse, some departments, like the NYPD, openly flout the law, creating their own databases."

Earlier this summer, New Jersey State Police came under fire for using blood taken from a baby — part of a mandatory newborn testing program, to identify new and rare diseases — to perform DNA analysis linking and eventually convicting the child's father of a sex assault he committed in 1996.

Jennifer Sellitti, an attorney with the Office of the New Jersey Public Defender, who's representing the father in a lawsuit, told The Post that under New Jersey law, "the police cannot obtain a blood sample from a person without applying for a warrant and going before a judge," neither of which happened with her client.

"The statute is clear that the blood is only to be used to identify diseases," she added. "That begs the question — why is the lab giving it up to law enforcement and why are they keeping the data for so long?"

There is no uniformity across state lines regarding how long DNA and related data can be kept, said Sonia Suter, a George Washington University Law School professor. In fact, Suter said, some states "require active efforts on the part of the person proven innocent in order to expunge the records and destroy the DNA."

Because DNA investigations have been so successful and there's so little regulation, police are increasingly using and keeping DNA information "from people who have not been convicted of, or even arrested for, a crime," said Suter. "If we care about limiting government surveillance, we should be very concerned about this."

Today, CeCe Moore is the chief genetic genealogist at Parabon NanoLabs in Reston, Va., and one of the most successful genetic genealogists working with law enforcement in the country. Her work has helped solve more than 230 violent crimes. But 10 years ago, when she began approaching commercial DNA companies about sharing their data with police, she was torn on whether it was the right thing to do.

"I did and do believe it is for the greater good and the best use of this incredible tool," she told The Post.

On the one hand, she said, "everyone should have the right to decide how they wish their own personal DNA to be used." But, she also believes that using public DNA database helps to "efficiently and quickly eliminate the vast majority of the population from being suspected of a crime. This will lead to less wrongful convictions and much more efficient law enforcement investigations."

Bennett Greenspan, president of FamilyTreeDNA — the first commercial site to share DNA data with authorities without a subpoena or warrant — apologized for not being more transparent in a 2018 email to users, but also defended their position.

"I am genuinely sorry for not having handled our communications with you as we should have," he wrote, but added that many of their customers saw it as "an opportunity for honest, law-abiding citizens to help catch bad guys."

Last year, Maryland and Montana became the first (and so far only) states to impose restrictions on how law enforcement can access genetic genealogy, requiring a warrant and limiting its use to crimes like murder, kidnapping and human trafficking. Other states, like Utah and Washington, are considering similar bills.

But Cahn said it might be too late to put the brakes on. “Sadly, given the number of Americans who have already been tested, the vast majority of us are already at risk,” he says. “If a sibling or just a couple cousins get their DNA tested, our own DNA can be extrapolated.”

For those caught up in a genetic genealogy investigation, the effects can linger even long after the case is closed. It’s been almost eight years since Usry was exonerated in the murder of Angie Dodge. The actual killer was caught thanks to DNA left on a discarded cigarette, and was sentenced to life in prison in 2021. But it’s not something Usry can ever put behind him.

“On the Internet, my name is always going to be associated with this murder, even though I was completely innocent and had nothing to do with it,” he says. “It’s affected me professionally probably in ways that I don’t even know about.”

He’s now working on a documentary about the Angie Dodge case. He said Angie’s mother, Carol Dodge, has become not just a collaborator on the project but a friend. “I have almost a decade of footage,” he says. “Hopefully I’ll finally be able to release it.”

Working on the movie helped give Usry a clearer perspective of what happened to him — and the implications.

“Right now, DNA is being used to catch old killers and stuff, and that’s great. But how long before cops get too carried away with it?” he asks. “What happens if somebody gets killed on your street, and police are like, ‘Let’s just bring in everybody in the neighborhood and swab their DNA?’ Then we’re all guilty till our DNA proves our innocence.”

Usry laughs at his own paranoia.

“I probably read too much science fiction. But man, it’s a scary thing, isn’t it?”

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HEADLINE	10/01 Venezuela, US exchange prisoners
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/1/venezuela-releases-7-jailed-americans-us-frees-2-p/
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — Venezuela on Saturday freed seven Americans imprisoned in the South American country in exchange for the release of two nephews of President Nicholas Maduro’s wife who had been jailed for years by the United States on drug smuggling convictions, a senior U.S. official said.</p> <p>The swap of the Americans, including five oil executives held for nearly five years, is the largest trade of detained citizens ever carried out by the Biden administration.</p> <p>“We are relieved and gratified to be welcoming back to their families today seven Americans who had been wrongfully detained for too long in Venezuela,” said Joshua Geltzer, the deputy homeland security adviser.</p> <p>It amounts to a rare gesture of goodwill by Maduro as the socialist leader looks to rebuild relations with the U.S. after vanquishing most of his domestic opponents. The deal follows months of back-channel diplomacy by Washington’s top hostage negotiator and other U.S. officials — secretive talks with a major oil producer that took on greater urgency after sanctions on Russia put pressure on global energy prices.</p> <p>Those freed include five employees of Houston-based Citgo — Tomeu Vadell, Jose Luis Zambrano, Alirio Zambrano, Jorge Toledo and Jose Pereira — who were lured to Venezuela right before Thanksgiving in</p>

2017 to attend a meeting at the headquarters of the company's parent, state-run-oil giant PDVSA. Once there, they were hauled away by masked security agents who busted into a Caracas conference room.

Also released was Matthew Heath, a former U.S. Marine corporal from Tennessee who was arrested in 2020 at a roadblock in Venezuela on what the State Department has called "specious" weapons charges, and Florida man, Osman Khan, who was arrested in January.

The United States freed Franqui Flores and his cousin Efrain Campo nephews of "First Combatant" Cilia Flores, as Maduro has called his wife. The men were arrested in Haiti in a Drug Enforcement Administration sting in 2015 and immediately taken to New York to face trial.

They were convicted the following year in a highly charged case that cast a hard look at U.S. accusations of drug trafficking at the highest levels of Maduro's administration.

Both men were granted clemency by President Joe Biden before their release.

The Biden administration has been under pressure to do more to bring home the roughly 60 Americans it believes are held hostage abroad or wrongfully detained by hostile foreign governments. While much of the focus is on Russia, where the U.S. has so far tried unsuccessfully to secure the release of WNBA star Brittney Griner and another American, Paul Whelan, Venezuela has been holding the largest contingent of Americans suspected of being used as bargaining chips.

At least four other Americans remain detained in Venezuela, including two former Green Berets involved in a slapdash attempt to oust Maduro in 2019, and two other men who, like Khan, were detained for allegedly entering the country illegally from neighboring Colombia.

The Biden administration did not release another prisoner long sought by Maduro: Alex Saab, an insider businessman who Venezuela considers a diplomat and U.S. prosecutors a corrupt regime enabler. Saab fought extradition from Cape Verde, where he was arrested last year during a stopover en route to Iran, and is now awaiting trial in Miami federal court on charges of siphoning off millions in state contracts.

The oil executives were convicted of embezzlement last year in a trial marred by delays and irregularities. They were sentenced to between eight years and 13 years in prison for a never-executed proposal to refinance billions in the oil company's bonds. Maduro at the time accused them of "treason," and Venezuela's supreme court upheld their long sentences earlier this year. The men have all pleaded not guilty and the State Department has regarded them — and the two other Americans freed on Saturday — as wrongfully detained.

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HEADLINE	10/01 Lawmakers face rise in threats, intimidation
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/01/us/politics/violent-threats-lawmakers.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — In Bangor, Maine, an unknown visitor smashed a storm window at Senator Susan Collins's home.</p> <p>In Seattle, a man who had sent an angry email to Representative Pramila Jayapal repeatedly showed up outside the lawmaker's house, armed with a semiautomatic handgun and shouting threats and profanities.</p> <p>In Queens, a man who had traveled across the country waited in a cafe across the street from Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's office to confront her, part of a near-constant stream of threats and harassment that has prompted the congresswoman to switch her sleeping location at times and seek protection from a 24-hour security detail.</p> <p>Members of Congress in both parties are experiencing a surge in threats and confrontations as a rise in violent political speech has increasingly crossed over into the realm of in-person intimidation and physical altercation. In the months since the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, which brought lawmakers</p>

and the vice president within feet of rioters threatening their lives, Republicans and Democrats have faced stalking, armed visits to their homes, vandalism and assaults.

It is [part of a chilling trend](#) that many fear is only intensifying as lawmakers scatter to campaign and meet with voters around the country ahead of next month's midterm congressional elections.

"I wouldn't be surprised if a senator or House member were killed," Ms. Collins, a Republican serving her fifth term, said in an interview. "What started with abusive phone calls is now translating into active threats of violence and real violence."

In the five years after President Donald J. Trump was elected in 2016 following a campaign featuring a remarkable level of violent language, the number of recorded threats against members of Congress increased more than tenfold, to 9,625 in 2021, according to figures from the Capitol Police, the federal law enforcement department that protects Congress. In the first quarter of 2022, the latest period for which figures were available, the force opened 1,820 cases. If recent history is any guide, the pace is likely to surge in the coming weeks as the election approaches.

Despite the torrent of threats, few cases result in arrest. A spokesman for the Capitol Police said officers have made "several dozen" arrests — but fewer than 100 — in response to threats against members of Congress over the last three years, adding that the majority come from people with mental illness who are not believed to pose an immediate danger.

"The goal is to de-escalate this behavior," said Tim Barber, the spokesman. "Most of the time getting mental health treatment may be more successful than jail in order to keep everyone safe. When we don't believe that is plausible, or the threat is serious and imminent, we make an arrest."

In a review by The New York Times this year of threats that resulted in indictments, more than a third were made by Republican or pro-Trump individuals against Democrats or Republicans deemed insufficiently loyal to the former president, and nearly a quarter were by Democrats targeting Republicans. In other cases, the party affiliation could not be determined.

Security concerns have grown so pressing that many members of Congress are dipping into their own official or campaign accounts to protect themselves. They have spent a total of more than \$6 million on security since the start of last year, according to an analysis by The Times of campaign finance and congressional data.

The data suggest that the threats are particularly acute against lawmakers of color — Hispanic, Black, Asian American and Pacific Islander and Native American — who outspent their white colleagues on security by an average of more than \$17,500. Democrats spent about \$9,000 more than Republicans did. And members of the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 assault spent over \$5,000 more than the average amount spent by members of Congress as a whole.

Representative Liz Cheney, Republican of Wyoming, who has been a frequent target of Mr. Trump's verbal attacks, spent more than any other Republican in the House, according to the data, pouring close to \$70,000 into security measures since the insurrection.

Representative Cori Bush, Democrat of Missouri, who [has spoken out about the death threats she has received as a Black woman on Capitol Hill](#), spent the most in the House: close to \$400,000.

That number pales in comparison to that of Senator Raphael Warnock, Democrat of Georgia, one of only two Black men in the Senate and the highest spender in Congress. He has doled out nearly \$900,000 for his own protection since being sworn in in 2021; Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, was the second highest spender, at nearly \$600,000.

Harsh and even menacing criticism of members of Congress is nothing new, but violent acts toward lawmakers were, until recently, a relatively rare phenomenon. In 2011, a gunman shot Representative

Gabrielle Giffords, then a Democratic congresswoman from Arizona, outside a supermarket near Tucson where she was meeting constituents. In 2017, Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana, then the No. 3 Republican, was shot at a congressional baseball practice in a suburb of Washington, D.C., by a man with a grudge against Republicans.

Now, as threats rise in frequency and become more violent, many lawmakers say they feel vulnerable both in Washington and in their districts.

Security on the grounds of the Capitol, which has long been fortified by barricades, metal detectors and checkpoints guarded by a phalanx of police officers, has only increased in the wake of the Jan. 6 assault. But while the House and Senate leaders have their own security details, including plainclothes officers and armored vehicles, it can be more difficult for rank-and-file lawmakers to obtain such protection, even when they are facing serious threats.

Many members of Congress say the process of getting extra support from the Capitol Police has been opaque and inconsistent.

It took two and a half years for Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, who is among the most threatened members of the House, to receive additional security from the Capitol Police, she said in an interview. The decision was made after the department flagged a tweet that it found to be threatening toward her.

“When I saw what it was, I was like, ‘I’ve gotten so much worse,’” Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said. “Why now?”

She said her office can hardly keep up with the “astronomical” amount of threats she receives in a day — more than any other member except House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Democrat of California and Representative Ilhan Omar, Democrat of Minnesota, according to what party leaders have told her. The onus is on the aides who answer the phones in her office — some as young as 19 — to determine what constitutes a threat.

So Ms. Ocasio-Cortez has taken matters into her own hands. Her office has a daily morning routine of creating a document with photos of the men who have made threats against the congresswoman, so that she can recognize and avoid or report them. Since 2021, she has spent more than \$120,000 on security services, according to the data analyzed by The Times.

According to the Capitol Police, the department follows the Supreme Court definition of a threat, which is “statements where the speaker means to communicate a serious expression of an intent to commit an act of unlawful violence to a particular individual or group of individuals.”

The force declined to disclose how it decides which members get additional protection.

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said the system is unfair to less-senior members, including women and people of color, who face serious threats and have less means to pay for protection.

“You are now extra tasked with providing and coming up with your own financial resources for your own safety,” she said.

The Capitol Police has struggled to adjust to the rise in threats, rushing in the aftermath of the Jan. 6 assault to ramp up its response amid severe strains on the department. J. Thomas Manger, the Capitol Police chief, testified in January that his force needed to double the number of agents who work threat cases against lawmakers.

A police spokesman said the department had met that goal.

The department has since opened two field offices in Florida and California, which have the most threats against members of Congress. It also has hired a new intelligence director tasked with improving data collection and sharing. And it now provides security assessments on members’ homes and district offices.

Still, the potential for violence has continued to mount.

“We sign up for a lot of things when we sign up for this job,” Ms. Jayapal said in an interview. “But having someone show up to your door with a gun, scaring your neighbors, scaring your staff, and clearly trying to intimidate me — it’s hard to describe.”

The Washington Democrat, who heads the Congressional Progressive Caucus, had grown accustomed to verbal harassment. But starting in April, she began receiving visits from a man in a car who would yell obscenities in the direction of her house.

Brett Forsell, 49, had sent Ms. Jayapal a “nasty” but “well thought-out” email back in January, which made clear that he disagreed with her, she said, but gave little indication that he intended to confront or harm her. Then around 11 p.m. one night in July — the third time he had come to her neighborhood — Mr. Forsell returned, revving his car engine, making U-turns in her street and parking near her driveway.

Ms. Jayapal’s husband, who took video of the encounter, reported hearing two male voices shouting obscenities and suggesting that they would stop harassing the neighborhood if the representative killed herself.

Mr. Forsell was arrested, and police reports said he planned to obtain a semiautomatic assault rifle and continue to return to Ms. Jayapal’s residence until she “goes back to India.” He pleaded not guilty in August and was ordered to pay \$150,000 bail and submit to GPS monitoring to ensure he stayed away from Ms. Jayapal.

After the incident, she said it was a struggle to get the Capitol Police to grant her additional protection.

“It took an enormous amount of pressure for me to feel like I was getting attention from Capitol Police,” Ms. Jayapal said.

She now has round-the-clock protection from the Capitol Police, but says the sound of loud cars in her neighborhood still strikes fear in her. When she is home, Ms. Jayapal constantly checks her phone, which has been programmed to alert her if Mr. Forsell comes within 1,000 feet of her, and plans her driving routes to avoid his neighborhood.

The incident transformed Ms. Jayapal into something of an activist on congressional security. She requested a caucus-wide meeting about the issue, which took place over the summer. And the congresswoman has been pushing for additional funding for extreme threats and information and resources about how best to secure one’s home and more transparency from the Capitol Police, who conduct threat assessments on members of Congress but do not share all the details with the members, she said.

In the case of Ms. Collins, the incident at her home was a notable escalation after years of verbal threats. In 2018, after she announced she would support the confirmation of Brett M. Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, she received a message that included footage of a since-deleted video of a beheading.

“We will c-t off your l-mbs and sl-ce off yo-r faces. We will t-ar out your tongues and dism-mber your org-as and sl-t your thro-ts while you watch,” the letter read.

It contained her personal phone numbers and addresses, as well as those of her staff and their relatives of her staff.

Three people are currently in jail and another few are awaiting some kind of action as a result of threats against her, Ms. Collins said.

The window-smashing incident was of particular concern, she said, because it occurred on a secluded side of her house, suggesting that the area had been “studied and chosen.”

	<p>“There’s been a sea change in that we now see this constant escalation and erosion of any boundaries of what is acceptable behavior, and it has crossed over into actual violence,” Ms. Collins said.</p> <p>In July, the House sergeant-at-arms, the chamber’s top law enforcement official, announced it would provide an additional \$10,000 for members to harden their homes against security breaches.</p> <p>Still, some lawmakers say they continued to feel unsafe.</p> <p>“It just feels like money was thrown at the situation,” said Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. “I just don’t know how seriously people are going to take this unless someone gets hurt.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 Sailor acquitted setting \$1.2B Navy ship fire
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/30/us/fire-bonhomme-richard-ryan-mays.html
GIST	<p>NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO — A sailor charged with intentionally setting one of the worst noncombat fires in U.S. Navy history, which destroyed the \$1.2 billion U.S.S. Bonhomme Richard in San Diego Bay, was found not guilty on all counts Friday by a Navy judge.</p> <p>Seaman Recruit Ryan Sawyer Mays, 21, who had been facing life in prison if convicted on charges of aggravated arson and willful hazarding of a vessel, wept with his head on the defense team’s table after hearing the verdict. Then, dressed in a crisp white uniform, he pushed through the crowded courtroom to embrace his wife and his parents.</p> <p>His father held him tight and said, “I never had a doubt.”</p> <p>The nine-day trial took place just a short walk from the pier where the immense amphibious assault ship burned for more than four days in 2020. Navy prosecutors portrayed Seaman Mays as a disgruntled young failure who had hoped to become a Navy SEAL, but dropped out of the notoriously punishing selection course and was reassigned to mop floors and scrape paint below decks on the Bonhomme Richard. He was so embittered, they argued, that he set his ship on fire.</p> <p>Navy defense lawyers countered that the fire was a result of carelessness and complacency on the part of Navy commanders, and that there was no evidence that the fire was arson or that Seaman Mays had lit it.</p> <p>Going into the trial, it was clear the prosecution faced challenges. At a preliminary hearing in December, a Navy judge recommended against taking the case forward, saying the lack of evidence made a conviction unlikely. Even so, the commander with convening authority over the case, Vice Adm. Stephen T. Koehler, decided to proceed.</p> <p>The Bonhomme Richard, commissioned in 1998, had 14 cavernous decks designed to carry aircraft, armored vehicles and nearly 2,000 Marines into combat. It was in the midst of a two-year, \$250 million renovation when a young sailor standing watch on July 12, 2020, spotted smoke coming from the lower vehicle deck.</p> <p>The fire spread quickly, devouring a clutter of cardboard, batteries, hand sanitizer and construction equipment packed into the vehicle deck. With the ship not fully functional, the crew failed to put out the flames. Nearly all of the 807 fire extinguishers onboard were out of order, and the sprinkler system did not work. Two hours passed before civilian firefighters could put any water on the fire, and by then it was too late. The fire burned the ship to a blackened hulk of scrap.</p> <p>Late last year, the Navy issued a scathing report detailing a cascade of mistakes and neglect that set the stage for the catastrophe, and formally punished 28 people, including the top commanders of the ship and the admiral who was in charge of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.</p>

In the weeks after the fire, Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents zeroed in on Seaman Mays after one young sailor who had been on watch said he saw a person wearing a mask and coveralls carrying a bucket to the deck where the fire started.

On the stand, though, the sailor admitted that his account had evolved under pressure from law enforcement. Initially he said he was unable to recognize the person who walked past. Later he agreed that the person "might be" Seaman Mays, and eventually, after seven interviews, he said that he was "90 percent sure."

For six months, Navy investigators pursued a sailor other than Seaman Mays, whom a witness said she saw sprinting from the vehicle bay at the time of the fire. A military expert said that sailor's handwriting was a probable match with a message scrawled in a portable toilet at the base saying: "I did it. I set fire to the ship." Other evidence from that sailor's internet searches and personal writings also seemed to suggest possible involvement.

The lead investigator in the case, Special Agent Maya Kamat, testified in Seaman Mays's trial that she interviewed that sailor four times, and shortly after the fourth interview, the sailor attempted suicide. He was administratively separated from the Navy a few days later. The Navy no longer had jurisdiction over him and stopped pursuing him, focusing instead on Seaman Mays.

Seaman Mays made it no secret that he had come to hate the Navy. Prosecutors played video footage of him telling investigators in crude language that he saw the "fleet Navy" as worthless, and that the only sailors "doing real stuff" were the SEALs and other special operators. But investigators turned up no physical evidence linking him to the fire, and he repeatedly denied setting it. Prosecutors did not make a public statement after the verdict was delivered on Friday.

Seaman Mays spoke briefly on the courthouse steps after his acquittal, thanking the judge and his lawyers. "I've lost friends, I've lost time with family, and my entire Navy career was ruined," he said. "I'm looking forward to starting over."

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HEADLINE	09/30 Kent police combat retail theft
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/kent-police-combat-retail-theft-with-operation-at-lowes
GIST	<p>KENT, Wash. - A rash of retail thefts has been sweeping western Washington and now, Kent Police are taking steps to put a stop to it, with officers working with retailers to target some of the worst offenders.</p> <p>Kent Police say they conducted an emphasis operation in which they put officers inside a local store with loss prevention staff. After that action, at least five people were facing theft charges. It was so successful, they are planning more.</p> <p>"Over the last couple years, we've seen the increase in crime, in this particular case, retail theft," said Jarod Kasner, the assistant chief of Kent PD.</p> <p>Kent Police also reported an increase in more aggressive thefts. Recently, police partnered with Lowe's for an emphasis operation to try to put a stop to it.</p> <p>The assistant chief says at that type of store, thieves have been known to target everything from screwdrivers to lumber and generators.</p> <p>"It affects not only the business, but the community as well as the people who are shopping there because prices go up," said Kasner.</p> <p>Police say the Lowe's operation was the result of brainstorming by commanders and a KPD patrol officer who had taken many of these reports.</p>

	<p>After the operation, five suspects were facing charges for theft. Officers also arrested two on felony warrants, three on misdemeanor warrants and gave six trespass warnings so the person can be arrested if they return. They also arrested one person for criminal trespass and recovered over \$1,000 in stolen property.</p> <p>"Some of the people we apprehended did have warrants for other things and pending charges," said Kasner. "Having a fixed business like Lowes it makes them a target for out of the area people to come in and take advantage of either the location, of where the business is, and how it's set up, and we work with them on how to minimize it," said Kasner.</p> <p>The assistant chief says they still have staffing constraints, but when they have the opportunity to bring officers in, they will conduct more emphasis actions.</p> <p>"Last time I was up at Uwajimaya, they were following a guy out that was shoplifting some stuff and making a scene about it," said Dylan Knutson of Auburn. He was shopping in Kent on Friday and is one of many residents in the area who have noticed the rise in crime.</p> <p>Knutson says changes in crime levels will be determined by the resources invested in it.</p> <p>"I think it just depends on what leadership is going to do about it," said Knutson.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 Seattle man on FBI 'most wanted' list
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/seattle-man-on-fbis-most-wanted-list-for-allegedly-stealing-30m-from-businesses-investors
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - A Seattle man is on the FBI's Most Wanted list for allegedly being involved in multiple schemes that put businesses and thousands of investors out \$30 million.</p> <p>According to the FBI, starting in 2017, 42-year-old Justin Costello allegedly stole around \$3.7 million from marijuana businesses in Washington, Colorado, California, Illinois and Alaska through his banking company, which he owned and operated.</p> <p>The FBI says Costello also allegedly defrauded private investors in his companies and engaged in several pump-and-dump schemes. Costello allegedly made numerous claims to potential private investors, none of which were true. He got \$30 million from these alleged schemes, the FBI said.</p> <p>A federal arrest warrant was issued for Costello on Sept. 28 out of Seattle after he was charged with 22 counts of fraud by wire and three counts of securities fraud.</p> <p>He was supposed to turn himself in to authorities in San Diego, but did not show up.</p> <p>Costello has ties to Washington, Las Vegas, San Diego, Sacramento, and Palm Springs, California. He may be traveling with his wife, Katrina Rosseini, who is not wanted, the FBI said. They may also have a small, white dog with them.</p> <p>Costello is 5'10" and weighs about 165 pounds. He has brown hair and blue eyes.</p> <p>If you have any information on him or if you've seen him, contact the FBI's Seattle Office at (206) 622-0460. You can also submit a tip online at tips.fbi.gov.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/30 Vancouver worry: bold, violent crimes
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/bold-violent-crimes-worry-shoppers-workers-in-vancouver#
GIST	VANCOUVER, Wash. — Vancouver Police are asking for the public's help to find suspects in two bold, violent crimes this week.

Investigators released a startling surveillance video showing a strong-arm robbery, which happened just before 11 a.m. Wednesday.

In the video you can see a maroon car, resembling a Kia Optima, pull up near a woman walking through the Vancouver Mall parking lot on her way to work.

A man in a black hoodie hops out of the car, runs up [behind the woman and tries to grab her purse](#).

The two struggle violently until the suspect knocks her to the ground and yanks the purse out of her grip, before hopping back into the car and speeding off.

“Being an older woman, I’m not really steady on my feet, so it really frightens me, because I work here, and I come here a couple times a week,” said Mary Yates, who works in merchandise at the mall.

She says after seeing that surveillance video, she’s going to be looking over her shoulder as she goes to work.

“I’m unsteady on my feet; you know, arthritis and everything else, so that really scares me that somebody can come behind me and, you know,” Yates said.

Another shocking crime at around 2 a.m. Thursday. Police say a man in a white sedan with a black roof pulled up to the McDonald’s restaurant on Andresen Street. The man tried to order food, but when employees told him they were closed, [he pulled out a gun and fired into the window](#).

Luckily, no one was hurt.

“And it’s getting worse and worse, especially in Portland, but it’s getting bad over here too,” said Vancouver shopper Pat Busig.

Yates, who’s lived here for 18 years, agrees with Busig.

“It’s a lot worse, you know, and stuff like that, I mean, people are getting more and more daring doing this kind of stuff, because, you know, they can get away with it,” she said.

We asked for an interview with Vancouver police leaders about this Friday, but they said no one was available.

We also reached out to Vancouver Mall and asked about security in the wake of this brazen robbery. They sent us back a statement:

"This was an isolated incident that is being investigated by the Vancouver Police Department. Vancouver Mall has a customized public safety program that includes a large number of security measures, many of which are not visible to the general public. While we do not discuss our specific security measures because doing so would compromise our public safety efforts, the safety and security of our shoppers, employees and retailers is and will always remain our highest priority."

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HEADLINE	09/30 WSP: I-5 shooting near elementary school
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/two-men-shot-i-5-express-lanes-seattles-university-district/WZPLYEBVCVBLDIXH5J4UAPZ6U4/
GIST	SEATTLE — Two men were shot along the Interstate 5 southbound express lanes Friday morning. Firefighters were called to the scene near Northeast 45th Street in Seattle’s University District at 6:49 a.m. after someone driving by heard gunshots and reported a person was hit, the Washington State Patrol confirmed.

When troopers arrived at the scene, they found a man who had been shot in the leg. Shortly after, investigators found another victim who had been shot in the hand in a homeless encampment under the I-5 ramps, WSP Trooper Rick Johnson said. Both victims were taken to Harborview Medical Center with injuries that were not life-threatening.

On one side of the camp is the U-District, and on the other side of the camp is John Stanford International, an elementary school.

People who work in the area say beyond snarling traffic for hours, they're worried for the kids.

"That makes me feel uncomfortable next to the school," said Lucy Wright, a University of Washington student who also works at the school. "It's become increasingly unsafe and it's not unexpected that there would be a shooting," she said.

"There's been more violent activity around here for sure, and it's definitely a little unsafe," said Darius Ochoa, who regularly passes through the area.

KIRO7 asked the Washington State Department of Transportation if there's outreach happening at the camp. A spokesperson said in an email, "The King County Regional Homelessness Authority is actively working to connect with people living at this location and others."

The state launched a "Right of Way Safety Initiative" this spring and acquired funding to specifically address camps along or under highways.

WSDOT said crews have provided services to and cleared out five highway camps in the past few months, three in King County and two in Thurston County.

In a blog post published after the shooting incident, WSDOT said, "This work doesn't happen overnight, but we are looking forward to making more progress in the coming months which will help bring people inside as well as remove the safety risks from encampments on rights of way."

Neighbors hope that help comes soon.

"It's just getting to a point where it's spilling over everywhere," Ochoa said.

Washington State Patrol investigators said they are unsure if the victims were associated with the encampment, and there are still a number of unanswered questions.

"The detectives are still trying to figure out where the shots were fired, where they came from. We really want anyone that was in the area at the time that has additional information to give us a call so we can follow up on that," said Johnson.

At one point, two of the three express lanes at the scene were blocked during the investigation. All lanes were reopened by 9:19 a.m.

Johnson said troopers have not found any weapons and he believes no cars were involved, but said the investigation is still in the early stages.

The next step is to interview those who reported the incident and continue to search the scene.

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HEADLINE	09/30 String of burglaries near Tacoma Mall
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article266613546.html

GIST	<p>Tacoma police are seeking help from the public to identify two people suspected of burglarizing a beauty-supply store last week. Police said the crime appeared to be tied to a series of burglaries near the Tacoma Mall.</p> <p>Police are investigating break-ins at nine businesses around the mall that occurred in the early hours of Sept. 19. On Thursday, Tacoma Police Department shared photos of two suspects. According to a Crime Stoppers bulletin, they are suspected of breaking in sometime from 3-6 a.m.</p> <p>In all of the burglaries, seven of which were reported at businesses along Tacoma Mall Boulevard, police said it appeared burglars used a vehicle to break in.</p> <p>Police said the suspects in the beauty-supply store break-in used a 2004 GMC Yukon to ram the windows and doors to get inside. Officers have recovered the vehicle.</p>
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